ONTARIO PARKS

Charleston Lake

Park Management Plan

© 2007, Queen's Printer for Ontario

Printed in Ontario, Canada

Cover photo: View of Charleston Lake from shoreline
Photo taken by: MNR staff

This publication is available electronically at:
http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/char_planning.html

Additional print copies of this publication are available from the Ministry of Natural Resources for $8.00 plus GST per copy from the Charleston Lake Provincial Park office:

Park Superintendent
Charleston Lake Provincial Park
148 Woodvale Road
Lansdowne, Ontario K0E 1L0
Tel: (613) 659-2065

51857
(0.150 k P.R. 30 03 07)
ISBN 978-1-4249-3359-4 (print)
ISBN 978-1-4249-3360-0 (PDF)

Printed on recycled paper

March 2007

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am pleased to approve the Charleston Lake Provincial Park Management Plan as the official policy for the management and development of this park. The plan reflects the Ministry of Natural Resources' and Ontario Parks' intent to protect the natural and cultural features of Charleston Lake Provincial Park and maintain and develop high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation for the residents of Ontario and visitors to the Province.

The document outlines a prioritized implementation strategy for the plan's elements and summarizes the consultation that occurred as part of the planning process.

There will be an opportunity to inspect the approved management plan for a period of 45 days after its formal release. This allows interested participants in the planning process a final opportunity to determine if their concerns have been considered.

The plan for Charleston Lake Provincial Park will be used to guide the management of the park. It may be reviewed throughout its life span to address changing issues or conditions, and may be amended as the need arises.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all those who participated in the planning process.

Yours truly,

A. Ireland-Smith

Adair Ireland-Smith
Managing Director
Ontario Parks

March 8/07

Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Environmental Values and the Environmental Bill of Rights v
Planning Context v
Aboriginal Context v

1.0 Introduction 1
2.0 Classification 3
3.0 Goal 3
4.0 Objectives 3
4.1 Protection 3
4.1.1 Life Sciences 3
4.1.2 Earth Sciences 4
4.1.3 Cultural Resources 4
4.2 Heritage Appreciation 4
4.3 Recreation 4
4.4 Tourism 5
5.0 Boundary and Land Tenure 5
5.1 Role of Neighbouring Lands 6
5.2 UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Designation 7
5.3 Lake Management Plan 7
6.0 Zoning 7
6.1 Nature Reserve Zones 8
6.2 Natural Environment Zones 9
6.3 Historical Zone 10
6.4 Development Zone 11
7.0 Resource Management Policies 12
7.1 Waste Management 12
7.2 Industrial / Commercial Uses 12
7.3 Natural Resources 13
7.3.1 Land and Water 14
7.3.2 Vegetation 14
7.3.3 Fisheries 16
7.3.4 Wildlife 19
7.3.5 Species at Risk 20
7.3.6 Forest Fire Management 20
7.4 Cultural Resources 22
7.5 Recreational Resources 23
7.6 Inventory and Monitoring 23
8.0 Operations Policies 23
8.1 Natural Heritage Education 24
8.2 Research 25
8.3 Partnerships 25
8.4 Recreation Management 26
8.4.1 Hunting 27
8.4.2 Trails 27
8.4.3 Mechanized Travel 28
8.4.4 Roofed Accommodation 29
8.5 Tourism Services 29
8.6 Marketing and Communications 29

9.0 Development Policies 29
9.1 Trails 30
9.2 Roads 30
9.3 Campgrounds 31
9.4 Picnic areas 31
9.5 Boathouse, Boat Launch and Docking 31
9.6 Canoe Launch 31
9.7 Staff and Roofed Accommodation 31
9.8 Maintenance and Administrative Areas 31
10.0 Plan Implementation 32
11.0 Plan Amendment and Review 33
12.0 Summary of Public Consultation and Significant Issues 33
12.1 Invitation to Participate 33
12.2 Background Information, Issues and Plan Alternatives 34
12.3 Preliminary Park Management Plan 34
13.0 Key References 36
14.0 Appendices 37
14.1 Appendix 1. Permitted Uses and Development 37

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Regional Setting 2
Figure 2. Park Zoning by Total Area 7
Figure 3. Park Boundary, Zoning and Development 17, 18

Statement of Environmental Values and the Environmental Bill of Rights

In 1994, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) finalized its Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) under the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR). The SEV is a document that describes how the purposes of the EBR are to be considered whenever decisions are made in the Ministry that might significantly affect the environment. This includes decisions made as a result of the park management planning process.

The primary purpose of the EBR is "to protect, conserve and, where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment." From the Ministry's perspective, that broad statement of purpose translates into four objectives in its SEV:

- to ensure the long-term health of ecosystems by protecting and conserving our valuable soil, aquatic resources, forest and wildlife resources as well as their biological foundations;
- to ensure the continuing availability of natural resources for the long-term benefit of the people of Ontario;
- to protect natural heritage and biological features of provincial significance; and
- to protect human life, the resource base and physical property from the threats of forest fires, floods and erosion.

The Ministry's SEV has been considered throughout the planning process. The management plan for Charleston Lake Provincial Park will further the objectives of managing Ontario's resources on an environmentally sustainable basis.

Planning Context

This park management plan has been prepared consistent with direction contained in *Our Sustainable Future, Ministry of Natural Resources Strategic Directions* (2005). This document has also been prepared consistent with direction contained in *Protecting What Sustains Us: Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy* (2005). The Ministry's vision is "sustainable development"; and the Ministry's mission is "ecological sustainability". The Ontario Parks program contributes mainly to the goal of: "Healthy Natural Environment for Ontarians", but contributes to other strategic elements as well. The mandate of the Ministry for Ontario Parks is to deliver Ontario's parks and protected areas program, which includes: the protection and management of provincially significant natural, cultural, and recreational environments; provincial parks operations; provision of tourism opportunities, natural heritage education; planning and management of parks and protected areas; policy leadership on conservation reserves; monitoring, auditing, and public reporting on Ontario's parks and protected areas.

Aboriginal Context

The park is located within an area of interest of the Mohawks of Akwesasne. Artifacts from rock shelters within the park provide evidence of past use by Aboriginal peoples.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Charleston Lake Provincial Park is a natural environment class park. Planning and management policies for provincial parks state that natural environment class parks *incorporate outstanding recreational landscapes with representative natural and historical features to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences.*

The Park is located centrally in the Ottawa-Montreal-Toronto triangle (Figure 1), 60 km northeast of Kingston and 15 km north of the St. Lawrence River, in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville. It lies within the Frontenac Axis area of southeastern Ontario.

Charleston Lake Provincial Park includes lands along the western and eastern shores of the lake, and 46 islands or parts of islands within the lake itself.

When the park was regulated in 1975, it comprised an area of 908.7 ha. A park master plan was approved in 1978 as the official policy for the conservation, development and management of the park. Since that time, the park's area has more than doubled, largely through the addition of Crown land in the Blue Mountain area and several Crown islands in 1997.

Charleston Lake Provincial Park is one of two natural environment class provincial parks located within ecodistrict 6E-10. Other protected areas within this ecodistrict include St. Lawrence Islands National Park, parks of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission and Conservation Areas operated by local Conservation Authorities. The park is identified as a core protected area within the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, an international designation that recognizes the ecology, land use, partnerships, and challenges facing this area.

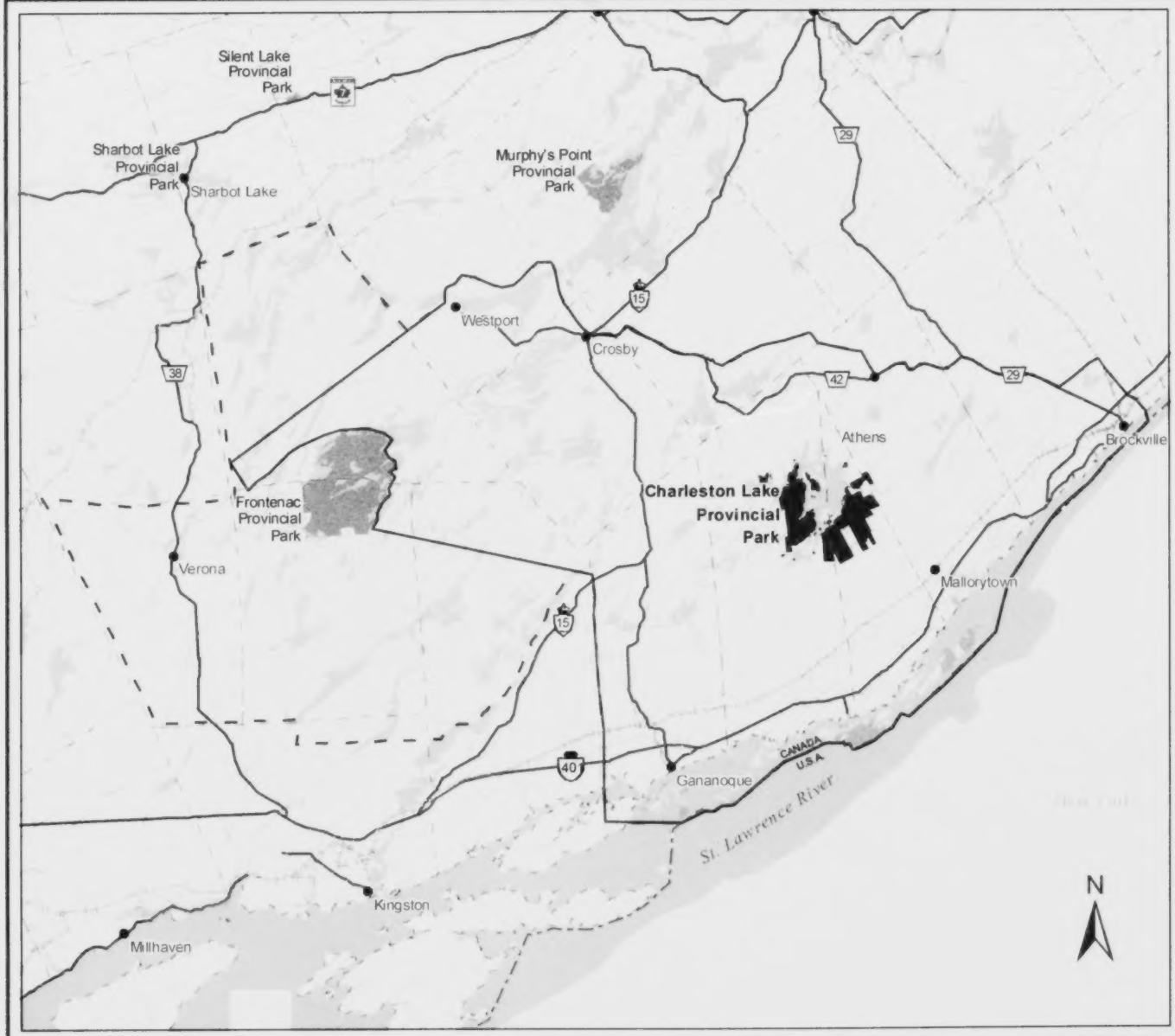
The park includes diverse and significant natural, cultural and recreational resources. Located on the Frontenac Axis, Charleston Lake Provincial Park has the rugged character of the Canadian Shield. Extremely steep, rocky slopes follow much of the park shoreline while inland the terrain is equally rugged with a system of abrupt ridges and valleys. Blue Mountain rises 100 m above Charleston Lake and offers spectacular panoramic views of the park and surrounding area. Because of the great diversity of terrain and vegetation communities, the park is home to a large number of species. The background information, issues and plan alternatives document (Ontario Parks 2002) provides detailed information on the park's setting, recreation facilities, natural and cultural heritage features, markets and use.

This approved park management plan will guide the management, operation and development of Charleston Lake Provincial Park over the next 20 years. The plan may be reviewed or amended as the need arises. Section 11.0 describes the process for review and amendment of the plan.

The Charleston Lake Provincial Park Management Plan has been developed in accordance with the *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies* (MNR 1992) *and Brockville District Land Use Guidelines* (DLUG) for the Ministry of Natural Resources Kemptville District (MNR 1983). In accordance with this plan, MNR will update affected area-specific land use policies and mapping.

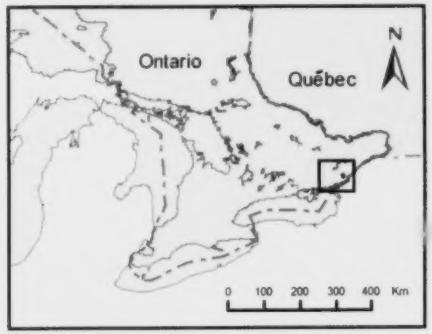
FIGURE # 1

REGIONAL SETTING MAP



ONTARIO PARKS

Charleston Lake



Legend Area Features

- Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Existing)
- Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Proposed)
- St. Lawrence Islands National Park Lands
- Operating Provincial Parks (2007)
- Charleston Lake Provincial Park

Transportation Features

- Major Autoroutes
- Roads
- Railway

Legend Base Features

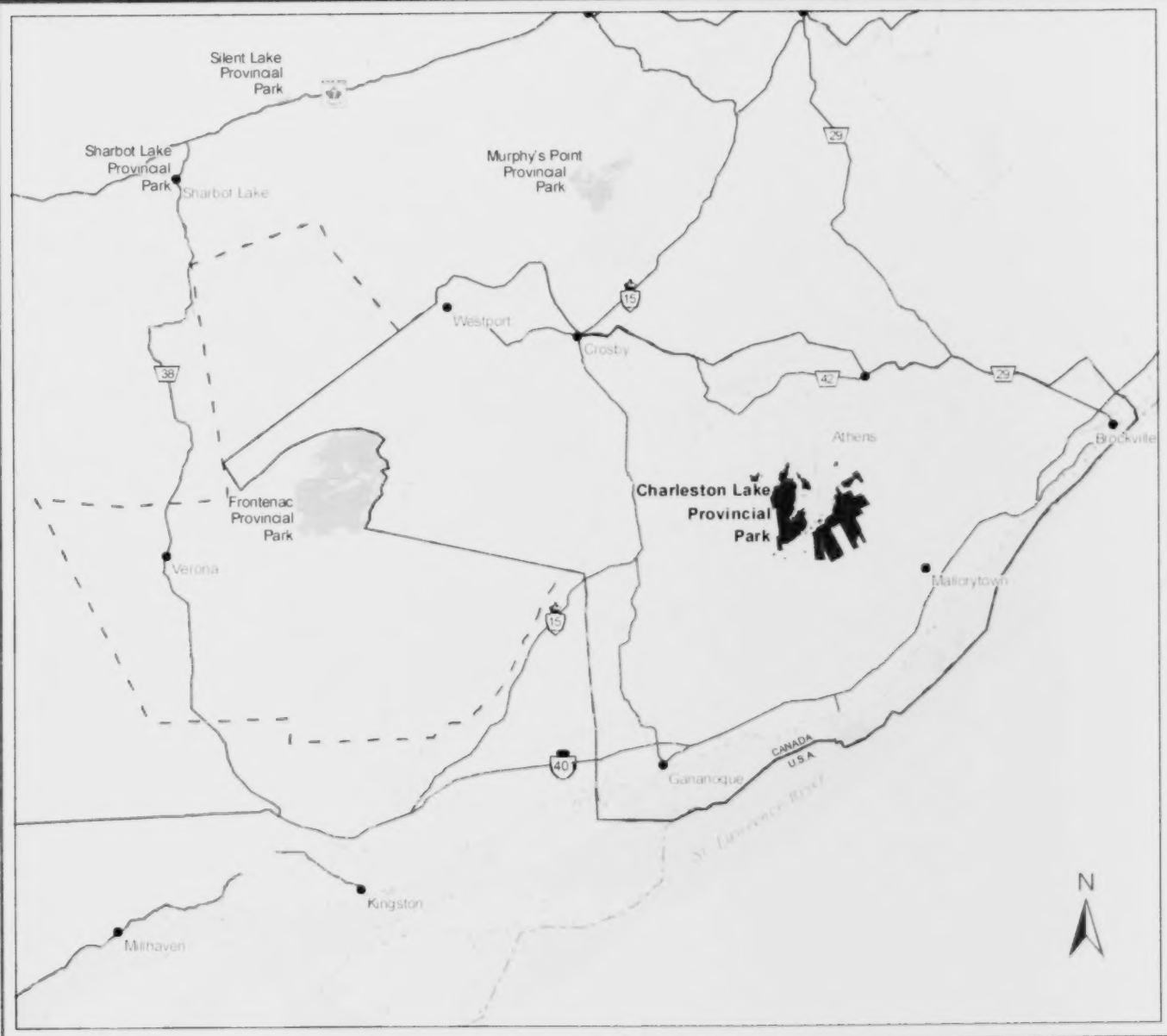
- Rivers
- Large Water Body
- Ontario / International Boundary

0 5 10 15 20 Km

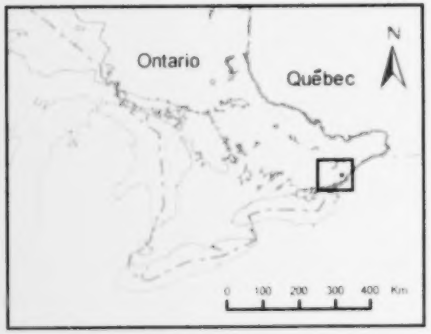
Ontario

Published March 2007
Copyright 2007 Queen's Printer for Ontario.
This map is illustrative only. Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of routes, locations of features nor as a guide to navigation.
Projection: UTM Zone 18
Datum: North American Datum 1983
Data derived from: Ontario Natural Resource Value Information System
Produced by: Ontario Parks, Planning and Research Section

FIGURE # 1 REGIONAL SETTING MAP



Charleston Lake



Legend Area Features

- Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Existing)
- Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve (Proposed)
- St Lawrence Islands National Park Lands
- Operating Provincial Parks (2007)
- Charleston Lake Provincial Park

Transportation Features

- Major Autoroutes
- Roads
- Railway

Legend Base Features

- Rivers
- Large Water Body
- Ontario / International Boundary

0 5 10 15 20 km

Ontario

2.0 CLASSIFICATION

Through park classification, Ontario's provincial parks are organized into broad categories, each of which has particular purposes and characteristics.

Charleston Lake Provincial Park will continue to be classified as a **natural environment** park. Natural environment parks incorporate outstanding recreational landscapes with representative natural features and historical resources to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences. Charleston Lake has all of these attributes.

3.0 GOAL

The goal for the park is:

To protect Charleston Lake Provincial Park's exceptional natural and cultural heritage, and provide high quality educational and recreational experiences appropriate to and sustainable within the park's environment.

Charleston Lake Provincial Park is governed by the *Provincial Parks Act*, the *Ontario Provincial Parks Policy* and *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies* (1992).

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The Ontario Provincial Parks System has four objectives: *protection* (which is the park system's primary objective), *heritage appreciation*, *recreation*, and *tourism*. As a natural environment park, Charleston Lake contributes to all four objectives.

The park objectives provide specific direction for park management and are described as follows:

4.1 Protection

To protect significant elements of the park's natural and cultural heritage.

This is the primary objective of the park. Protection will not be limited to provincially significant features.

Ontario's provincial parks play an important role in representing and conserving the diversity of Ontario's natural features and ecosystems across the broader landscape. Protected areas include representative examples of life and earth science features and cultural heritage features within ecologically or geologically defined regions, commonly known as ecodistricts. Ontario's 71 ecodistricts are defined based on broad similarities in landforms and predominant vegetation. Charleston Lake and Frontenac are the two provincial parks within ecodistrict 6E-10, protecting natural environments representative of this ecodistrict. Ontario's ecological classification system provides the basis for the life science feature assessment, and the geological themes provide the basis for earth science assessment.

4.1.1 Life Sciences

The park protects provincially significant landscapes, including much of the Blue Mountain Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), a rugged area with extensive mixed forest and a lowland bog community, all of which provide habitat for many rare and significant species (White 1993). It also protects areas of provincially significant wetland. The park supports 13 species at risk, and at least 27 provincially significant species. Charleston Lake is one of two lakes with the best natural lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) populations within the MNR Kemptville District area.

4.1.2 Earth Sciences

The park displays many features that are of earth science significance. The provincially significant landscapes of the Blue Mountain ANSI include important representation of exposed rock ridges, rock barrens and rock cliffs (White 1993). The park is on the boundary between two major physiographic units, and both the rugged Precambrian rocks of the Frontenac Axis and the flat sedimentary rocks of the Ottawa-St. Lawrence Lowlands are of high interpretive value since they are of good quality and often of easy access. The park is of high interpretive value on a regional and local scale. Feature highlights include varying topography, rocks of different ages, folding, crossbeds, conglomerates and rock shelters formed in the Precambrian – Paleozoic contact (Clement 1974).

4.1.3 Cultural Resources

The park has a rich and varied history. There are many registered archaeological sites within the park including rock shelters and open-air campsites on the shores of the lake. These sites exhibit evidence of use by Aboriginal peoples. The rock shelters are culturally significant. Nineteenth century pioneer agricultural landscapes and a few known historical mine sites are considered of historical interest, providing evidence of European settlement history of the Frontenac Axis.

4.2 Heritage Appreciation

To provide opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the park's natural and cultural heritage through interpretation, education and unstructured exploration.

Individual and group exploration and appreciation will continue to be encouraged in Charleston Lake to the extent compatible with and complementary to protection of the park's natural and cultural heritage values, and recreation and tourism objectives. The Natural Heritage Education Operating Plan will continue to provide direction to achieve this objective, through a range of interpretive and educational programmes that reflect the diversity of features and resources in the park. The programmes target a wide variety of user groups. The plan will stress the relationship of the park to its surrounding landscape (ecosystem approach). Specific heritage education facilities and services are described in Section 8.1.

The existing trail system will continue to provide opportunities to interpret natural (terrestrial and aquatic) and cultural (Aboriginal and post-European) features.

4.3 Recreation

To provide day use, camping, and related outdoor recreation opportunities appropriate to the park.

The park will emphasize non-mechanized, natural environment based experiences to the extent compatible with and complementary to protection of the park's natural and cultural heritage values, and its tourism objective. To a great extent the recreation objective was achieved through the previous master plan, through creation of campgrounds, trails, interior campsites and picnic sites. The types of recreation activities within the park vary depending on the various zones within the park. The park will continue to provide opportunities for camping (e.g. campground and walk-in/boat-in), picnicking, swimming, boating, canoeing/kayaking, hiking, snowshoeing/cross-country skiing, nature appreciation (e.g. bird

watching/wildlife viewing), photography, fishing, and hunting.

4.4 Tourism

To provide Ontario residents and visitors with opportunities to discover and experience the park's natural, cultural and recreational environment.

Tourism opportunities will be achieved by working with area municipalities and community groups to promote the tourism and recreation values of Charleston Lake. The park will be promoted on the basis of its natural and cultural heritage values. The park will continue to offer day use opportunities for passing travelers as well as destination day use and overnight use opportunities for those attracted from considerable distances. The benefit of attracting day use and overnight visitors to the park will be the contribution to the regional economy through park expenditures and tourist spending. Approximately 90,000 people visit the park each year, including both day users and campers. Campers' and day use visitors' expenditures for items such as food, beverages, fuel, transportation, attractions and entertainment during fiscal 2000/01 were approximately $883,520. Add to these numbers the park operating expenditures such as wages and purchases of local services, and the economic impact of the park to the area is doubled.

Charleston Lake Provincial Park will continue to provide information related to surrounding areas and communities, such as park and open space activities, points of interest, and attractions. Tourism development initiatives are further described in Section 8.5.

5.0 BOUNDARY AND LAND TENURE

Figure 3 in this plan illustrates the park boundary as per Ontario Regulation 382/01 and also includes recommended park additions described below. When the new boundary comes into regulation, the park's area will increase from 2352.7 ha to an estimated 2573.4 ha.

The regulated park area at the time of this planning process included: the western area of the park regulated in 1975 (908.7 ha); lands along the eastern shore of the lake regulated in 1997 and 2001 and commonly referred to as the Blue Mountain area (1312.4 ha); and 43 island holdings (131.6 ha), also regulated in 1997.

While this plan was prepared several boundary issues were identified. These issues can be dealt with as minor boundary amendments to the park. These issues will be dealt with as they arise and as time and resources allow.

Ontario Parks is committed to an ecosystem approach to park planning and management. The *Provincial Parks Act*, which governs activities within provincial parks, pertains only to lands and waters within park boundaries. An ecosystem approach allows park management to consider the relationship between the park and the surrounding environment. Park managers may consider potential impacts on park values and features from activities occurring on adjacent lands, and potential impacts from park activities on land uses in adjacent areas. Ontario Parks will encourage efforts of adjacent landowners to protect significant natural and cultural features outside park boundaries.

Park management plan policies apply only to the area within the regulated park boundary. Protection of park values and

features will be achieved through appropriate zoning, control of land use activities, education and monitoring of ecological impacts.

Ontario Parks will support in principle the acquisition of property for the purposes of addition to the park, if acquisition will enhance the values of the park. Acquisition or securement will be subject to funding and willingness of the owners to sell or lease their properties or enter into a conservation easement. Adjacent lands could be valuable to the park for protection of natural or cultural values, resource management and/or operational reasons. Such lands include private lands within the Blue Mountain ANSI boundary, properties land-locked by the park (e.g. along the shoreline of Charleston Lake), and lands on islands that are adjacent to the park.

Leeder Block

During the planning process approximately 750 ha of Crown land known as the Leeder Block was considered for addition to the park. Of the 750 ha considered, a decision was made to include about 100 ha (Figure 3). This area includes most of the Blue Mountain ANSI that now lies outside of Charleston Lake Provincial Park.

There is a deeded right of way through this area to an adjacent private lot. Any adjacent private properties will be excluded from the park boundary.

The remainder of the Leeder Block will remain as Crown land. MNR Kemptville District will continue to manage the natural, cultural and recreational values of this Crown land to complement the park and the goals and objectives of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve.

Other Park Boundary Changes

During the planning process some gaps or errors were noted in the regulation plan for the park. This will be remedied through a minor housekeeping amendment. Two additional parcels of Crown land along Charleston Lake will be added to the park. One is a 20 ha parcel that contains the portage between Charleston Lake and Red Horse Lake that is currently maintained by the park, and the other is a small 1.4 ha parcel adjacent to the park boundary on Slacks Bay that includes a cabin used for park purposes (Figure 3).

The addition of Crown land to the park required an administrative amendment to the District Land Use Guidelines.

The boundary will also be amended to add two parcels of patent land, totaling approximately 99.3 ha, which were acquired by the Crown in 2004 and 2005 as an addition to the park (Figure 3).

Title records for Fawn Island indicate it to be in private ownership. Unless it becomes subject to a lease agreement with Ontario Parks, this island will be removed from the park boundary through a plan amendment.

Where required, surveys may be completed to precisely locate the park boundary lines both on land and on the water.

5.1 Role of Neighbouring Lands

Park management plan policies apply only to the area within the regulated boundary of the park. Ontario Parks will encourage efforts of adjacent landowners to protect significant natural and cultural features outside park boundaries.

The park ecosystem is defined as the area of influence surrounding the park from an ecological, social and economic point of view. The park ecosystem in this case can be considered at a minimum as the watershed of Charleston Lake or at a

greater scale as the area of the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve or ecodistrict 6E-10. Park management will be directed toward maintaining a healthy, diverse and sustainable natural environment, which will enhance achievement of the park's other objectives.

Complementary land use approaches by owners and managers of lands adjacent to the park benefit the natural heritage features of the park and the entire ecosystem. Some provincially significant features (e.g. provincially significant wetlands, Blue Mountain ANSI) cover large areas, and are partly within the park and partly within adjacent private and Crown lands. In recognition of the protection of significant features on their lands, private landowners of such lands may be eligible for incentives, such as the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP).

5.2 UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve Designation

The park is identified as a core protected area within the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve, which was officially designated in 2002 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This was the third Biosphere Reserve in Ontario, out of a current total of 13 in Canada. The Biosphere Reserve area has important natural and ecological values and supports a variety of economic, social and recreational activities. The official UNESCO Biosphere Reserve designation will enhance the ability of local people to develop, promote and organize projects and activities linking conservation with social and economic development in their region. The Biosphere Reserve has been endorsed by the municipal, provincial and federal government authorities in the area. Ontario Parks, Southeast Zone will continue to be involved in the governance of the Biosphere Reserve.

5.3 Lake Management Plan

Local associations have prepared a Lake Management Plan for Charleston Lake. It includes information on physical character, land use and lake health, and action plans for the community of Charleston Lake. As Charleston Lake Provincial Park includes a substantial length of the lake's shoreline and areas of the bed of the lake, Ontario Parks will continue to have an interest and play a role in protecting the natural heritage of the lake.

6.0 ZONING

Lands within Charleston Lake Provincial Park are zoned in accordance with their environmental and historical features and values and their sensitivity to development. The four zoning categories designated for the park (historical, nature reserve, development and natural environment) are based on the *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies*. The zones differentiate the sensitivity of the natural and cultural values, and the permissible degree of development, recreational uses and management practices within the provincial park. The percentage of the total park area by zone type is illustrated in Figure 2.

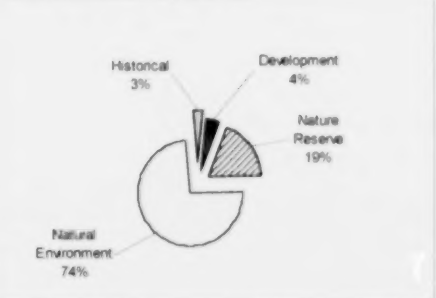


Figure 2. Zoning as a Percent of Total Area

There are 12 distinct zones as illustrated in Figure 3: 3 nature reserve, 1 historical, 6 natural environment, and 2 development zones. Each zone permits certain land uses and is managed in accordance with specific strategies. As a whole, the zones are designed to fulfill the goal and objectives of the park.

Zone boundaries may be delineated more precisely on the ground where necessary.

For any future acquired lands, zoning will be consistent with the adjacent park lands, unless alternate zoning is required to protect the values of these lands.

The following sections briefly describe each zone. The area in hectares identified in parenthesis beside each zone description is approximate. The resource management policies, recreation activities, and types of development permitted in each type of zone are summarized in Appendix 1. All resource and recreational uses and facility development will be subject to provincial legislation and policies governing provincial parks, as well as the park specific policies in Sections 7.0, 8.0, and 9.0.

6.1 Nature Reserve Zones

Nature reserve zones protect provincially significant natural features, their contributions to the environmental diversity of the park and the park system, and their potential for scientific research and public appreciation. These zones include any significant earth and life science features that require management distinct from that in adjacent zones, as well as a protective buffer with an absolute minimum of development. Limited low-impact activities (e.g. hiking, nature appreciation) may be permitted. Monitoring to prove that these activities are not leading to degradation within the zone will also be permitted. Development will be minimal, and may include signs and trails. The park's three nature reserve zones include approximately 19 percent of the total park area.

Zone NR1 - Tallow Rock Bay & Slim Bay (374 ha)
NR1 extends from the development zone (D1) north to Tallow Rock Bay, and includes upland and wetland areas with a range of relatively undisturbed forest types, rock barrens, all waters of Slim Bay and Mud Bay, and the rocky shoreline of Slim Bay. Species at risk, such as black ratsnake (*Elaphe obsoleta*; Threatened), as well as provincially rare pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*), and regionally rare species are found within this zone. This zone includes approximately 5 km of hiking trail, including 300 m of boardwalk, and the portage from Killenbeck Lake to Runnings Bay. Opportunities for outdoor recreation are designed and developed for low impact, non-mechanized use. The adjacent land acquired in 2005 for addition to the park is included within this zone.

A small existing ski cabin within this zone is no longer in use and in disrepair and is slated for removal as resources permit.

Zone NR2 - Beech Woods & Hemlock Ridge (101 ha)
NR2 includes an area of rich deciduous forest that is home to rare species and sensitive features. These woods are home to the southern flying squirrel (*Glaucomys volans;* Special Concern) and the red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus;* Special Concern), listed as species at risk at the time of preparation of this plan. Provincially rare and regionally rare species are found within this zone. Two trails (Hemlock Ridge and Beech Woods) total approximately 5 km and are entirely within this zone.

Opportunities for outdoor recreation are designed and developed for low impact, non-mechanized use.

The adjacent Crown land parcel to be added to the park is included within this zone. The existing cabin within this parcel is within zone D2 (Section 6.4).

Zone NR3 - Park Islands (15 ha)
NR3 includes seven (7) islands in whole or in part (Big Bluff, Bill, Browns, Buck, Fawn, Grindstone, and Lena). This zone protects pitch pine and other rare species and sensitive features found on these islands. There are no recreational facilities within this zone.

6.2 Natural Environment Zones

Natural environment zones include natural landscapes which permit the minimum level of development required to support low-intensity recreational activities. Development will be limited to portages, trails, interior campsites, interior picnic sites, signs necessary for route identification and minimal interpretive facilities. The park's six natural environment zones include approximately 74 percent of the total park area.

Zone NE 1 – Westside (181 ha)
Much of the land within this zone, as identified in the 1978 master plan, has been incorporated into NR1. This zone encompasses all of the park land and water north of Runnings Bay lying east of NR1. The purpose of this zone is to provide dispersed recreation with some educational interpretation. This zone includes approximately 7 km of hiking trail and a floating bridge at Slim Bay. Trail facilities are designed to promote exploration and discovery in a natural setting. Four small clusters of interior campsites and one day use picnic site are located within this zone. Opportunities for outdoor recreation are designed and developed for non-mechanized use. There are three private cottage properties adjacent to the park in this area, accessible only by water.

Zone NE2 - Blue Mountain and Leeder Creek (1 ha)
Zone NE2 includes all of the Blue Mountain area of the park and recommended additions within the Leeder Block (Section 5.0). This zone contains provincially significant features (e.g. provincially significant wetland, ANSI) that extend beyond the park boundary onto private lands. Most of the area has a rugged terrain with alternating rock ridge and valley topography. There is a diverse ground flora and a range of moderately-mature forest associations with little recent disturbance.

This zone includes the crest of Blue Mountain, which is noted for its scenic view. The area south of the crest supports sensitive features and rare species (e.g. heronry, black spruce (*Picea mariana*) bog). The zone includes stands of pitch pine, and other significant species of plants and animals, and interesting geology. There are a number of provincially and locally rare plants along the shoreline of Leeders Creek.

This zone is suitable for low impact recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing and photography.

This zone includes a hiking trail from the Huckleberry Hollow water access point to the crest of Blue Mountain. It also includes an offshoot trail to Mud Lake, which, based on existing mapping, may be only partly within the park (Section 8.4.2). There are two designated picnic sites along the Charleston Lake shoreline. Activities such as hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing occur. Hunting occurs within this zone. An existing Ontario Federation of

Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) trail passes through this zone (Section 8.4.3).

Three private water access cottage properties are located along the shoreline adjacent to this zone and surrounded by the park.

An authorized pedestrian access trail to Blue Mountain is proposed, to address traditional access to this area across land from the south. This trail may follow a section of the existing snowmobile trail. This access would be in addition to access by water from the Huckleberry Hollow landing (Section 8.4.2).

If the parking area for the proposed new trail to Blue Mountain cannot be located within the road allowance for either Mountain Street or Blue Mountain Road, a section of park adjacent to the traveled road may be removed from this zone through a plan amendment and zoned as access, to allow for a staging area for the trail. This area could include the trailhead, parking area, and support facilities (e.g. privies, information display, signs, self-serve fee station).

The adjacent land acquired in 2004 and recommended for addition to the park is included within this zone.

Zone NE3 - Park Islands (97 ha)
Zone NE3 includes 39 park islands within Charleston Lake, of which three are partly in the park and partly outside the park because of partial private ownership (i.e. Buck, Crow, Deer). These islands contribute greatly to the charm and appeal of Charleston Lake. Only limited low impact day use is suitable on these islands. Picnic sites are located only on those islands with a suitable landbase and terrain. Currently there are two designated island picnic sites, both on Deer Island.

Zone NE4 - Shoreline Centennial (14 ha)
Zone NE4 is surrounded mainly by the lake and Boathouse Cove. It protects both natural and cultural heritage features and values and provides unique opportunities for heritage appreciation. Limited low-intensity recreational activities are suitable within this zone. Zone NE4 includes the Shoreline Centennial Trail, one interior camping cluster, and one picnic site.

Zone NE5 – Red Horse Lake Portage (20 ha)
Zone NE5 is a parcel of land recommended for addition to the park, as it adds both natural and cultural heritage values. It contains the portage between Red Horse Lake and Charleston Lake.

Zone NE6 – Waters of Charleston Lake (153 ha)
Zone NE6 includes the areas of the bed of Charleston Lake that are within the park boundary, described as:

- within 30 m of controlled high water mark of the shoreline of zones NR1, NR2, NE1, NE2, NE4, NE5 and D1.
- within 10 m of controlled high water mark of the shoreline of zones NR3 and NE3 (park islands).

This zone also extends 10 m inland along the shoreline of zone D1 . The beaches and canoe launch along Runnings Bay and the existing boathouse and docking facility within Boathouse Cove will remain within zone D1.

6.3 Historical Zone

Historical zones encompass the significant cultural resources of a park. They generally focus on a specific site (e.g. area of human occupation, building(s)) and that site's relationship to the surrounding landscape, so they may include a protective buffer around the

main feature in the zone. Development is limited to trails, necessary signs, interpretive, educational, research and management facilities, and historical restorations or reconstruction where appropriate. The park's one historical zone is approximately three percent of the total park area and includes an area where there is a concentration of cultural heritage sites.

Zone H1 - Sandstone Island (67 ha)
This zone on the peninsula between Runnings Bay and Slacks Bay is an enlargement of the 39 ha area identified in the 1978 master plan. This area includes several registered cultural heritage sites, including archaeological sites (e.g. rockshelters and associated open air sites) and cultural landscapes (e.g. farmsteads, plantation, fencelines). Interpretive and educational programming occur within this zone, primarily on the Sandstone Island Trail.

There are cultural heritage sites outside this zone that, because of their small size and locations, are not included in historical zones.

A small existing ski cabin within this zone is no longer in use and in disrepair and is slated for removal as resources permit.

6.4 Development Zone

Development zones contain the area(s) of the park suitable for intensive day-use and car camping activities. They constitute a relatively small portion of most parks. Development may include roads, visitor control structures, beaches, picnic areas, car campgrounds, commercial service facilities, maintenance facilities, park office and orientation, interpretive, educational, research and management facilities. The park's main development zone is located on the peninsula between Slacks Bay and Runnings Bay, and includes approximately four percent of the total park area.

There are no Charleston Lake waters within the park's development zones.

Zone D1 - Development Zone (103 ha)

This zone is a refinement of the original 289 ha area identified in the 1978 master plan, based on a review of natural and cultural resource information. Lands removed from the previous zone boundary were incorporated into zones NR2, H1 and NE4. The purpose of the development zone is to provide moderate intensity day-use and camping activities within an exceptional natural environment. In conjunction with camping, the zone also provides access to Charleston Lake in the form of boat and canoe launch facilities, and swimming, fishing, and educational opportunities. Seasonal activities such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing occur throughout the zone. Snowmobiling occurs on the park's primary road. Cycling occurs on all public roads within the zone.

Approximately 450 m of Woodvale Road passes through this zone. Policies specific to this section of road allowance are included within Section 9.2.

This zone contains the existing development in the park including: park office, maintenance complex, gatehouse, 1 staff cabin, 3 car campgrounds with a total of 238 developed campsites and 4 associated comfort stations, trailer dumping station, group camping area with 3 group campsites accommodating a maximum of 120 campers, visitor centre and associated parking areas, amphitheatre and associated parking area, swimming beaches, canoe launch, boat launch, boathouse, storage barn, wood compound, and wood chip storage area. It also contains trailheads for the Westside System, Shoreline Centennial,

Sandstone Island, Beech Woods and Hemlock Ridge trails.

This zone also contains primary and secondary park roads. The primary road is within a 20 m road right of way. The secondary park roads are within a 15 m road right of way. The secondary road that passes through the NR2, H1 and NE4 zones is restricted to authorized users.

Section 9.0 contains policies for existing development and proposals for new development.

Zone D2 – Park Cabins (6 ha)

This zone includes three existing cabins and associated outbuildings, each within a footprint extending out 25 m from the exterior walls of the cabin. Because of the small size of each footprint, this zone is not illustrated in Figure 3.

The cabin adjacent to zone NR2 and the cabin adjacent to zone H1 are used as staff quarters and have road access. The third cabin is along the lake shoreline adjacent to zone NE2 and is water access. This cabin was donated to the park in 2005, after the private owner was informed that a boundary survey of that area had identified the cabin as being within the park boundary.

7.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Charleston Lake Provincial Park will be managed in accordance with the policies as set out in the *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies* (1992) for natural environment parks. The following polices will guide the management of park resources consistent with the *Endangered Species Act*, the *Provincial Parks Act* and with the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*. All resource management projects will be undertaken consistent with *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*.

An adaptive management approach will be applied to resource management activities within Charleston Lake Provincial Park. Adaptive management allows for frequent modification of management strategies in response to monitoring and analysis of the results of past actions and experiences.

7.1 Waste Management

Sewage from comfort stations and other buildings in zone D1 will continue to be disposed of in septic tank tile field systems within this zone. Sewage from vault privies will be removed from the park for disposal.

Waste consisting of natural materials, such as leaves and grass clippings, will be reused or composted inside the park where feasible and appropriate. Otherwise, all solid waste will be removed from the park for recycling or disposal.

7.2 Industrial / Commercial Uses

The following uses are not permitted in Charleston Lake Provincial Park:

- Commercial forestry.
- Prospecting, staking mining claims, developing mineral interests, working mines.
- Extraction of sand, gravel, topsoil or peat.
- Commercial hydroelectric power development.

There are four commercial licences that include areas within the park boundary:

one commercial food fishing licence and three commercial bait harvesting licences. Existing commercial fishing and bait harvesting on waterbodies wholly enclosed by the park (e.g. Mud Lake) will be phased out when either the licence is surrendered, the current licensee dies, or by December 31, 2009, whichever comes first. No new operations will be permitted in the park.

There are no commercial fur harvesting licences within the park. This activity was phased out of the park as per provincial park policy; new operations will not be permitted. Status Indians exercising treaty rights are permitted to continue commercial fur harvesting in all parks, subject to applicable legislation and regulation. The transfer of traplines is permitted between Status Indians.

7.3 Natural Resources

The diversity of plant and animal life, the lake's combination of coldwater and warmwater habitats and the park's attractive scenery have all contributed to the park's significance as a protected area.

Life science survey and evaluation reports were completed for the Blue Mountain ANSI and Charleston Lake Crown islands (White 1994), the west area of the park (White 1998) and more recently for the Leeder Block of Crown land (White 2002). The park supports a diversity of plant and animal species, including a number of species at risk and provincially and regionally rare species. Charleston Lake supports an important coldwater sports fishery.

In this plan "species at risk" means native Ontario species assigned status designations of Special Concern, Threatened, Endangered or Extirpated:

1) As listed by MNR on its *Species at Risk in Ontario* list, including:
   - Species named by regulation under Ontario's *Endangered Species Act*; and
   - Species designated as Special Concern, Threatened, Endangered (not regulated) or Extirpated in Ontario by MNR, or

2) As listed in Schedules under the federal Species at Risk Act, including:
   - Species designated as Special Concern, Threatened, Endangered, or Extirpated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

In this plan, "rare species" refers to species considered to be either provincially or regionally rare. "Regionally rare" species are species that are common in the province, but have been designated by experts as rare in this part of Ontario. "Provincially rare" species are those species designated by the Natural Heritage Information Centre (NHIC) as S3 to S1; each has less than 100 occurrences in Ontario.

"Non-native species" means species not native to Ontario. Non-native species will not be deliberately introduced. "Invasive species" means species that are likely to spread and negatively affect native ecosystems. Where possible, actions will be taken to eliminate or reduce the threat of invasive species which may be affecting the diversity of naturally occurring populations. Where non-native species are already established and threaten natural or cultural values, a program of control may be undertaken if feasible and practical.

The park will maintain records on the status of invasive species in the area through contact with appropriate groups or agencies (e.g. Charleston Lake Association, Ontario Federation of

Anglers and Hunters). Park staff will assist in monitoring efforts related to invasive species within Charleston Lake. Policies specific to vegetation are found in Section 7.3.2.

7.3.1 Land and Water

The park goal, objectives and resource management, operations and development polices endeavor to ensure that park management activities are sustainable and minimize impacts to Charleston Lake.

No dams or weirs will be built in the park. Wherever possible, new development or redevelopment will be undertaken so as not to disrupt natural drainage. Wherever possible, natural drainage will be restored where it has been disrupted by past or present development.

The water level of Charleston Lake is controlled by a dam located at the south end of the lake at the community of Outlet, operated by Eastern Ontario Power. The water level is lowered by more than one metre annually each fall before freeze-up (September to October). Since these annual water level fluctuations have been occurring for over 100 years it can be assumed that the significant vegetation species and communities currently along the lake shoreline are able to persist under these conditions.

The two beaches along Runnings Bay within the development zone (D1) were created in the past using sand from external sources. Wave action and drift have caused beach erosion. In order to maintain a quality recreation beach, various rehabilitation techniques may be utilized, such as adding sand as required to enhance aesthetics and to encourage recreational use. Beach improvements are subject to approval by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, who are responsible for assessing the impacts of shoreline projects on fish habitat and spawning areas.

The park is located within two municipal townships within the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville: Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands and Township of Athens and Rear of Yonge and Escott. MNR will recommend to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs that the municipalities be asked to ensure that their official plans appropriately identify the park's lands and waters. This will ensure that new development or site alteration adjacent to the park is assessed with regard to any potential impacts on the park's natural heritage features and areas in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement under the *Planning Act*

7.3.2 Vegetation

Management will be directed toward promoting the health and diversity of natural vegetation communities, particularly within nature reserve and natural environment zones. A vegetation management plan will be prepared for the park, by Ontario Parks or by an external contractor in consultation with Ontario Parks. Management requirements arising from the plan will be based on a review of natural communities combined with park zoning (i.e. vegetation management units). Where appropriate, the recommendations below will be addressed in the vegetation management plan. More specific management direction may be included in this plan.

The vegetation management plan may be linked to a fire management plan, which could consider modified response to contain wildfires in areas of fire-adapted vegetation communities (e.g. pitch pine) rather than complete suppression (Section 7.3.6).

A baseline survey of age and health of pitch pine stands will be completed. The non-native conifers planted within the development zone will be evaluated and, if deemed to be invasive (e.g. Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)), they will be removed or thinned as necessary. If the vegetation management plan determines that the Scots pine plantation areas within the historical zone do not pose a threat to natural values, these plantation areas may be retained as associated with a registered cultural heritage site, within their original footprint.

Native species may be planted for the purposes of campsite or trail rehabilitation and for increasing natural vegetated buffers between campsites.

Vegetation may be mowed, cut or pruned only:

- within zone D1, as required to maintain road safety or to the extent necessary to minimize interference with intensive recreational use;
- to enable resource or recreation management (e.g. trail maintenance) authorized by this plan or by an approved implementation plan;
- to enable facility development specifically authorized by this plan;
- to improve aesthetics around buildings; or
- to ensure public safety.

Trees may not be cut for the purpose of providing firewood. Unless further direction is provided through a vegetation management plan or other implementation plan, in addition to removal of invasive species, forest management will be limited to selective cutting of hazard trees such as those adjacent to trails, interior campsites and picnic sites, or development and access areas. Standing dead trees will be removed if they pose a safety risk, but otherwise will be left in place as wildlife habitat. In appropriate cases, broken or rotted limbs or crowns may be removed, leaving the lower trunk for wildlife habitat. Windthrown trees will be left to decompose naturally, unless they pose a threat to health or safety, or interfere with regular park operations. Trees and brush cut in nature reserve and natural environment zones will be left to deteriorate naturally as close as possible to where they have been felled. Trees and brush cut in historical, development and access zones will be left to deteriorate naturally as close as possible to where they may have been felled, or if that is not feasible, may be removed for use as wood chips in the park.

Native insects and diseases affecting vegetation will be allowed to progress naturally, except where they threaten significant natural heritage values in nature reserve, historical or natural environment zones, or significant aesthetic values in development zones, in which case they may be controlled. The control of non-native insect and disease species may occur where there is a threat to the park's features or adjoining Crown or private lands. Where control is undertaken, it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the specific insect or disease so as to have minimal effects on the rest of the park's environment. Non-chemical and species specific controls will be used whenever possible.

Chemical fertilizers will not be used in the park, other than for the purposes of campsite rehabilitation within the development zone.

Control of invasive plant species will follow the direction in the South Eastern Zone Invasive Exotic Plant Management Strategy (Ontario Parks 2003) and the policies of this plan. Mechanical or other alternatives to chemical pesticides will continue to be used where feasible. Under exceptional circumstances, where pesticides provide the only feasible

option for control, chemicals that have low or no soil activity and for which environmental impacts have been tested and shown to be minimal, may be used outside the development zone. In these circumstances, chemical pesticides and suppressants will not be used for any vegetation management other than:

- insect and disease control and fire suppression under the conditions set out in this section of the plan or resource management plans authorized through this plan;
- eradication of non-native species, where it has been demonstrated that other methods with less residual impact on the park's environment are not feasible; and
- control of poison-ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans ssp. negundo*) to ensure visitor health and safety within the development zone and on park trails.

7.3.3 Fisheries

The fisheries of Charleston Lake and other waterbodies within the park boundary will be managed in accordance with the MNR Kemptville District fisheries management plan. Wherever possible, fisheries management within the park will seek to maintain and enhance native, self-sustaining fish populations. Certain park waterbodies may be closed to fishing temporarily or permanently for fisheries research or management purposes. Sport fishing is permitted except in areas where fish sanctuaries are established. Recreational fishing is subject to provincial and federal fisheries regulations (e.g. *the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* and the *Fisheries Act* (Canada)) as set out in the *Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary*.

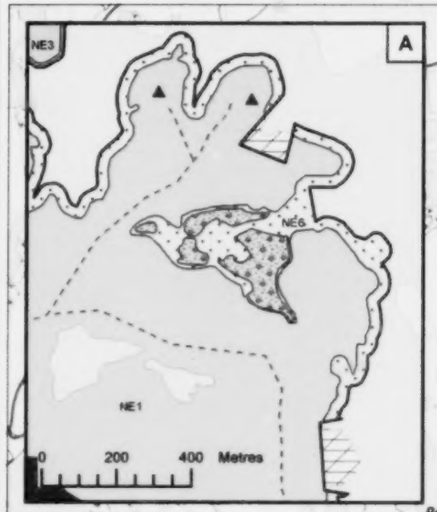
In natural environment zones, the MNR Kemptville District may stock native fish species into park lakes for the purposes of providing opportunities for sport fishing, when in accordance with an approved MNR District fisheries management plan. The impact of stocking on native fish populations must be considered. The MNR District will notify Ontario Parks and obtain approval from the Park Superintendent prior to any fish stocking or other management activities that may occur within the park boundary.

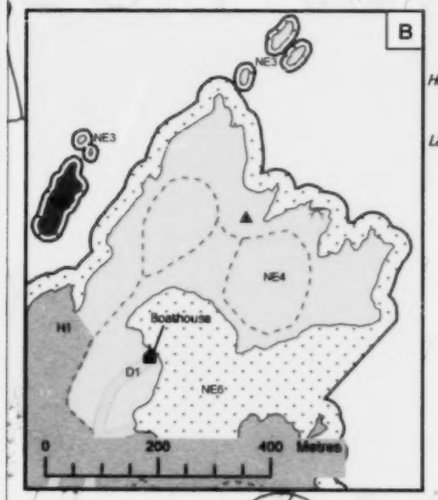
Mud Lake, within natural environment zone NE2, is stocked with brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), a species native to Ontario. As there are few cold-water fisheries within southeastern Ontario, Mud Lake provides valuable sport fishing opportunities (Sport Fishing Division 10). Stocking of Mud Lake has occurred for over 30 years as a management tool to provide additional opportunities for angling in the local area. An assessment of the health of the fishery of Mud Lake and the recreational value of the lake will be completed in consultation with MNR Kemptville District staff. The assessment methods may include: creel census, gill netting, and Near Shore Community Index Netting (NSCIN). Stocking of native species may continue subject to additional direction to be determined by Ontario Parks in consultation with the MNR District, based on an evaluation of natural and recreational values of the fishery. Any such direction will be incorporated into the appropriate MNR District fisheries management plan. Stocking will cease if assessment indicates that the lake has an established, self-sustaining population that will provide a long-term fishery, or if assessment indicates that the stocking program is resulting in unacceptable impacts on populations of fish native to the lake.

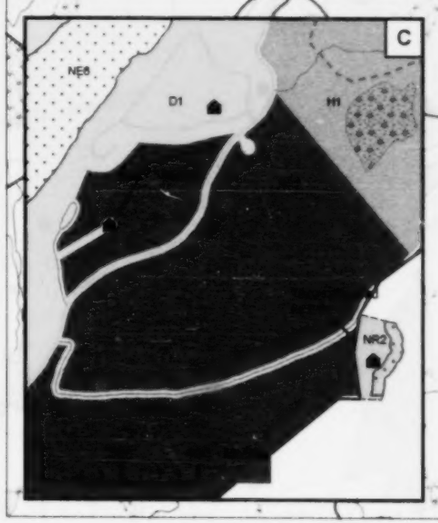
Motorized vehicle/vessel use to support the activity of sport fishing is not permitted within the boating restriction areas within the park (Section 8.4.3), or on park lands, such as the Blue

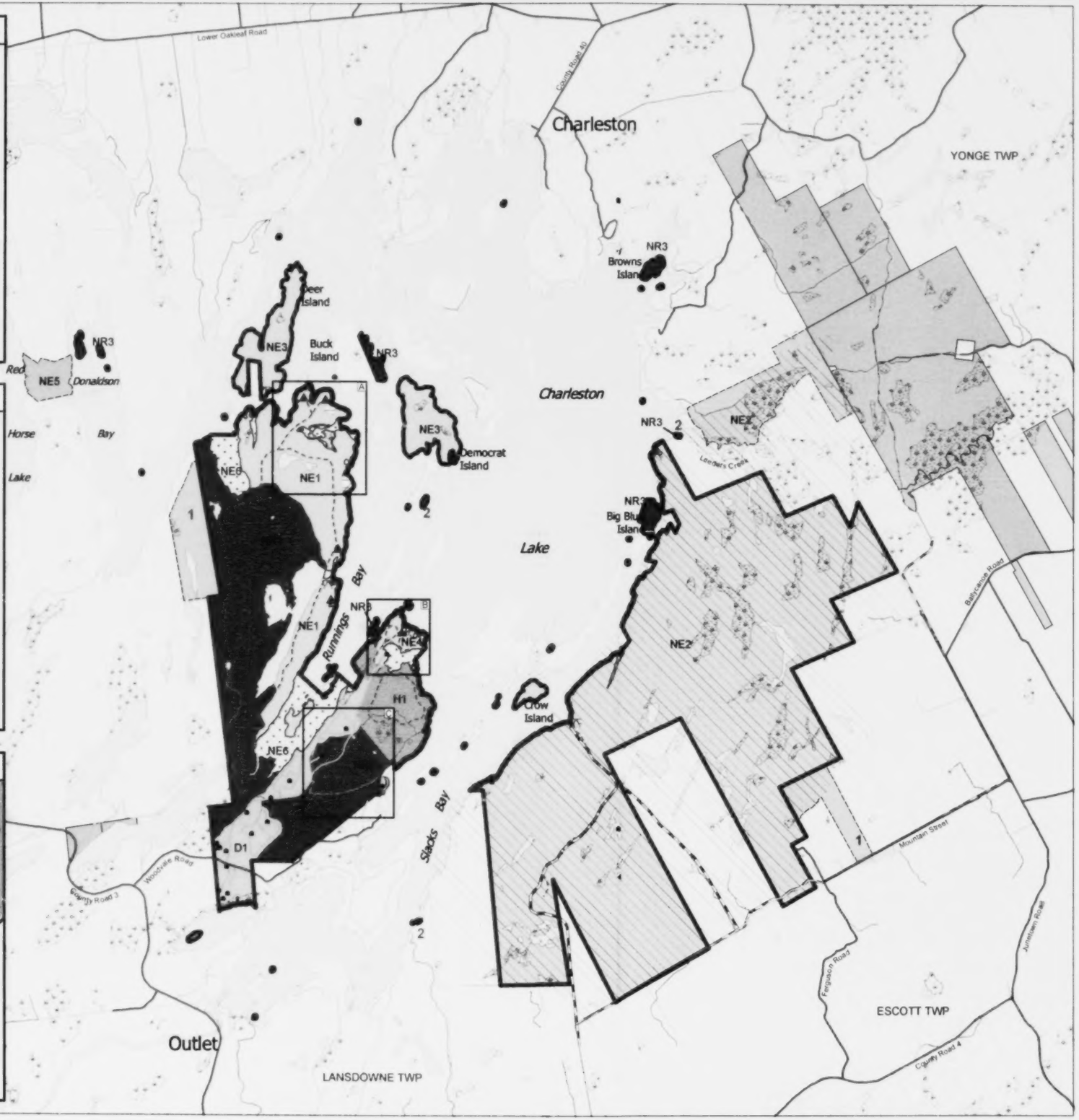
Charleston Lake

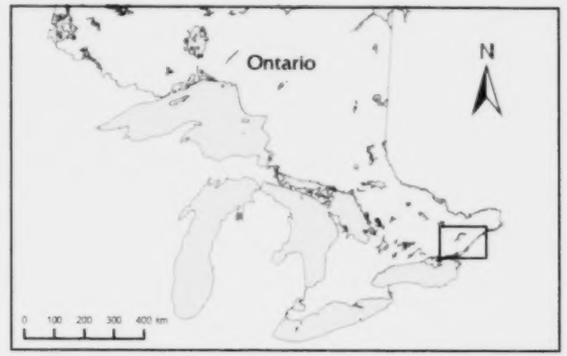
ONTARIO PARKS











Park Zoning

- Park Boundary
- D1 Development Zone
- H1 Historical Zone
- NE1 Natural Environment Zone
- Nature Reserve Zone
- NE6 (Waters within Charleston Lake)

Features

- Building(s)
- Picnic Sites
- Interior Campsites
- Blue Mountain ANSI
- Recommended Additions
- To Be Removed From Boundary

Base Features

- Lake
- Wetland
- River / Creek
- River / Creek Intermittent
- Crown Land
- Lots & Concessions

Transportation

- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- Tertiary Road
- Trail / Canoe Route
- Snowmobile Trail

Notes

1 Recommended Addition
This feature illustrates the approximate boundary of land acquired from a willing landowner for the purposes of addition to the regulated park area. Zoning for the adjacent park lands will be extended to this area.

2 Park Islands
Island ownership under review at the time of preparation of this plan (Section 5.0).

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 km

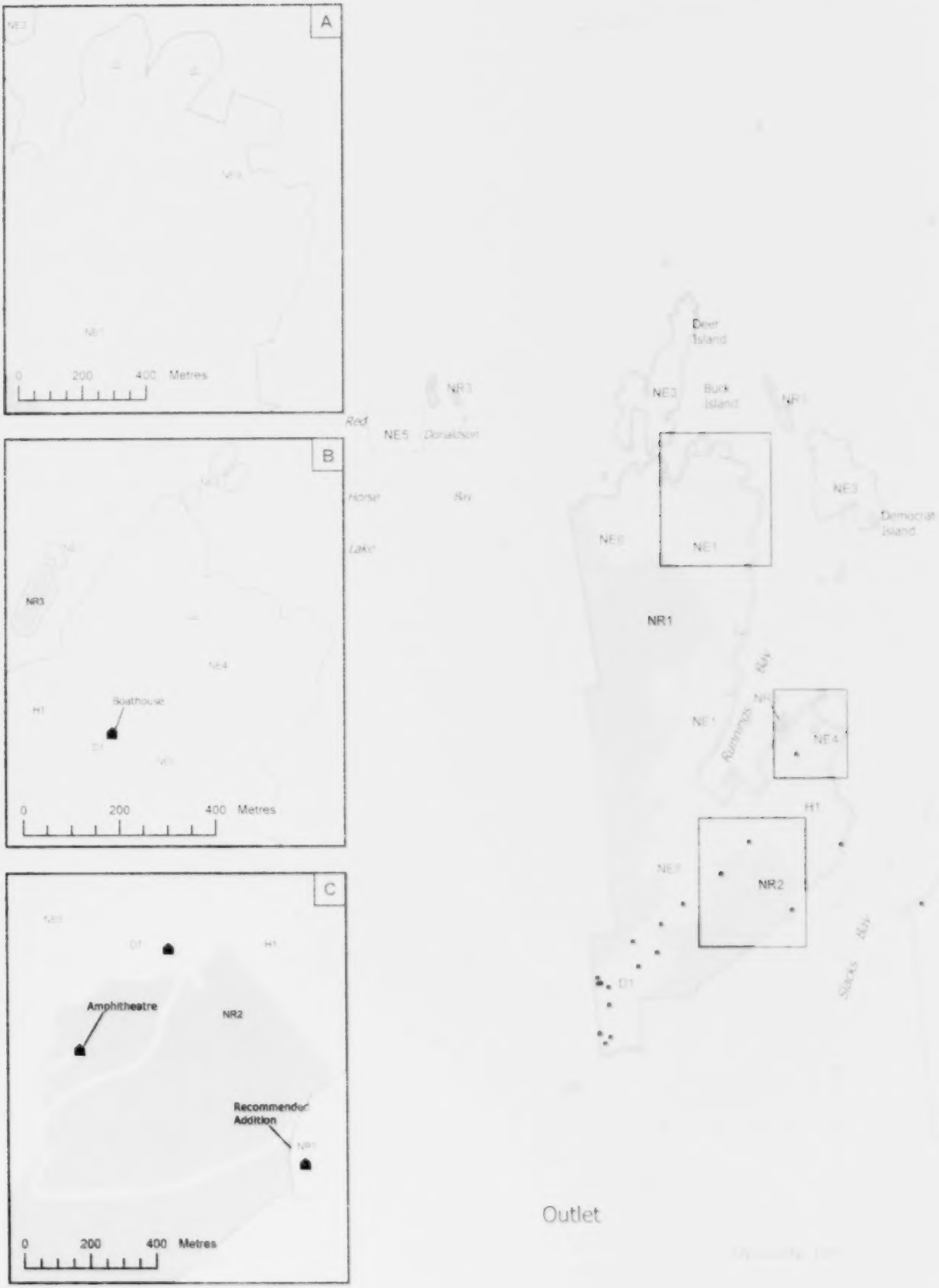
Ontario

Published March 2007
© 2007, Queen's Printer for Ontario

This map is illustrative only. Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of routes, locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation.

Projection: UTM Zone 18
Datum: North American Datum 1983
Base Derived From: NRVIS (Natural Resource Values Information System)
Produced By: Ontario Parks, Planning & Research Section

FIGURE 3


A
0 200 400 Metres
B
Boathouse
0 200 400 Metres
C
Amphitheatre
NR2
Recommended Addition
0 200 400 Metres
Deer Island
Buck Island
Democrat Island
NR1
NR2
NR3
NE1
NE2
NE3
NE4
NE5
H1
D1
Red
Horse
Lake
Rum
Slack
Outlet

Charleston Lake
Charleston
Ontario
Charleston
Lake
NR1
NE2
NR2
Park Zoning
Features
Base Features
Transportation
Ontario

Mountain area of the park (i.e. ATVs). MNR District publications providing information on fishing opportunities within the park will identify these restrictions, as an effort to assist in the implementation of restrictions on all terrain vehicle use and off-trail snowmobile use within the Blue Mountain area of the park.

Provincial park policy prohibits the use or possession of bait fish within natural environment class parks. In order to comply with provincial park policy and reduce the risk of accidental introductions, Ontario Parks will seek to establish regulations under the appropriate legislation to prohibit the use or possession of live bait fish within waterbodies wholly contained within the park. The *Ontario Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary* lists some restrictions on bait fish within Charleston Lake (e.g. live or dead alewife, gizzard shad, lake herring/cisco).

7.3.4 Wildlife

The management of wildlife will be directed toward promoting healthy populations and diverse communities. Management will follow requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves and approved species specific management plans (e.g. recovery plans).

Hunting will be permitted in specific areas (Section 8.4.1) and will be undertaken consistent with regulations under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*.

Animal populations, including nuisance domestic animals, may be controlled when essential to protect human health and safety, natural heritage values, the health of species outside the park, or the values for which the park was established. The park will use visitor education to reduce conflicts between visitors and healthy native animals. Conflicts that have arisen due to visitor behaviour, such as feeding and littering, and not considered as endangering human health and safety will normally not require animal control. When animal control is necessary, techniques with minimal effects on the balance of the park's environment will be used. Any animal control measures (e.g. hunting, trapping) will be implemented directly by, or under the direct supervision of, Ontario Parks.

Ontario Parks is studying the effects of deer browse on vegetation growth within the park, and MNR Kemptville District monitors deer density in the park area. If research indicates that the number of deer in the area is a concern, a resource management plan may be undertaken to determine management actions within the park in the context of the broader landscape. Development of any such plan would require public consultation.

Raccoon Rabies

The park is within a high-risk area for raccoon rabies. A high-risk area is a 50-kilometre buffer zone around confirmed raccoon rabies cases. The MNR implemented a control program within this area in 2000 to help contain the outbreak. Under the authority of the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* , raccoon rabies carrier species (e.g. raccoons, skunks, and foxes) found or trapped in the high-risk area cannot be moved or relocated. This is designed to stop the spread of the disease. The MNR uses a variety of tools to battle the spread of rabies in wildlife. These include: site control where a rabid animal has been found, trap-vaccinate-and-release programs, and aerial baiting to immunize rabies carrier species and reduce the spread of the disease.

MNR works in co-operation with local Health Units, the Canadian Food

Inspection Agency, the public and municipalities to increase public awareness of rabies. Information on raccoon rabies is posted in the park each year. Control of rabid animals or rabies within the park will be subject to Declaration Order MNR-62 made under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (Wildlife Rabies Control Program).

7.3.5 Species at Risk

Native Ontario species are assigned status designations through complementary review and assessment processes implemented at national and provincial levels. Status designations are assigned at the national level by COSEWIC, and at the provincial level by MNR.

As of June 2006, 13 species at risk, 18 provincially significant species and 49 regionally rare species were known to occur within the park. To date, life science studies have largely concentrated on plants and birds. As a result of studies in 2004 and 2005, seven provincially significant insect species were added to the park list. Some of the park's fauna and flora have not been intensively inventoried, and future studies may identify other special plant or animal features. Because of this, it is possible that additional species at risk and rare species inhabit the park.

Species at risk and their habitats will be protected consistent with the *Endangered Species Act* and regulations. Species found within a recommended or regulated provincial park that have been identified on the Species at Risk in Ontario (SARO) list by MNR as Endangered (not regulated), Threatened or Special Concern will be afforded the same level of protection as an Endangered species listed in regulation under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Populations of species at risk and rare plants and animals will be monitored. The park may undertake management actions for species at risk as supported by research and directed through approved recovery plans or other species specific management plans.

The black ratsnake[1] is a species at risk found within the park that is featured in the park's natural heritage education program. Ontario Parks' staff will continue to cooperate with the black ratsnake recovery team and recovery activities that are underway. The 1992 *Draft Charleston Lake Provincial Park Black Rat Snake Management Plan* will be reviewed in light of the recovery plan in progress and information collected through research. Research by qualified groups or individuals that is related to protection of species at risk will be encouraged when it may aid in species protection and recovery.

Extirpated native species may be reintroduced, and existing populations replenished, if biologically feasible and desirable for perpetuating park values.

Status designations assigned to native Ontario species in MNR's SARO list issued June 30, 2006 were referred to during preparation of this plan.

7.3.6 Forest Fire Management

MNR recognizes fire as an essential ecosystem process, fundamental to restoring and maintaining the ecological integrity of protected areas in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region.

Fire management involves the protection of values and the attainment of resource

[1] Also referred to as the grey (or eastern) ratsnake, the genetics of this species in Ontario and its relation to black ratsnakes in more southern regions of North America are under investigation.

management objectives through two main areas:

- fire response: the protection of people, property and natural areas from wildfire; and

- fire use: the strategy of maintaining fire as an ecological process or meeting resource management objectives through the application or management of prescribed fire.

The Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario (MNR 2004) provides strategic direction for the management of wildfire across Ontario. Charleston Lake Provincial Park is within the Southern Ontario Fire Management Zone identified in this provincial strategy.

Fire management within Charleston Lake Provincial Park will help to restore and maintain ecological integrity while preventing personal injury, value loss or social disruption. In particular it may help to enhance habitat for certain flora and/or fauna, such as pitch pine.

Ontario Parks and the MNR fire program will work together to prepare a statement of fire intent. This document describes the interaction of fire with the land base, identifies preliminary fire management objectives and options, and recommends any further planning efforts. If the statement of fire intent identifies that a fire management plan is appropriate, a fire management plan will be prepared in accordance with the Fire Management Planning Guidelines for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves.

Fires that pose a threat to public health and safety, public or private property and infrastructure or other values will receive full response and sustained action. Sustained action, if required, will be directed through an approved Fire Assessment Report that has been developed in consultation between the Park Superintendent or Zone Manager and authorized fire management personnel.

Opportunities for modified response and monitoring to achieve ecological or hazard reduction objectives may be considered in consultation between the Park Superintendent or Zone Manager and authorized fire management personnel. Consideration and documentation will be in accordance with the Guidelines for Modified Response and Monitoring during Managed Fire Operations.

During periods of escalated fire activity, availability of suppression resources may be limited. If necessary, fires will be prioritized for initial attack and/or sustained action. Prioritization will involve consultation between senior park and fire managers at the district and regional levels. Approved Fire Assessment Reports will be used to prioritize fires and identify the appropriate response options.

"Light on the land" fire suppression techniques will be used wherever feasible. These minimal impact suppression techniques do not unduly disturb natural or cultural values. Examples of such techniques may include limiting the use of heavy equipment and foam, or limiting the felling of trees during fire response. The statement of fire intent will identify whether the use of prescribed natural fire may be appropriate in certain backcountry areas of the park. If this use is appropriate, a fire management plan would further investigate the development of prescriptions for the use of natural fire.

The use of fire through prescribed burning to achieve ecological or hazard reduction objectives may be considered. Plans for any prescribed burning will be developed in accordance with the MNR

Prescribed Burn Planning Manual, its associated planning manual, and the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves, in cooperation with Haliburton Fire Management Headquarters.

Fire evacuation procedures will be as outlined in the Fire Emergency and Evacuation Plan for Charleston Lake Provincial Park. Response for structural fires and forest fires is guided by a municipal forest fire management agreement between the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Leeds and the Thousand Islands Township fire department.

7.4 Cultural Resources

Archaeologists have identified many sites exhibiting evidence of Aboriginal use within the park, including traditional use and archaeological sites, such as open-air campsites and rockshelters. The park also contains cultural landscapes and associated built heritage sites (e.g. farmsteads, fencelines, pillars). The Blue Mountain area of the park has had little evaluation of cultural heritage values, and archaeological work may be needed prior to any trail development identified in Section 8.4.2.

Significant cultural features will be protected from incompatible development wherever they occur in the park. Incompatible resource uses and recreational activities will be restricted or prohibited where necessary to protect significant cultural heritage values. Archaeological and historical artifacts may only be removed and heritage landscapes altered as part of approved cultural heritage research or management projects.

There have been studies of cultural heritage sites in the west area of the park. Several registered archaeological sites have been identified. Further study of other areas of the park or existing sites, where appropriate, will be encouraged. Management strategies for any archaeological sites found in the future may range from allowing the site to evolve without human interference, to research, excavation and rehabilitation.

Protection and management will be undertaken in consultation with the Ministry of Culture and the First Nations community. Cultural features within the historical zone will be managed according to policies for that zone. For registered cultural heritage sites outside this zone, human interference will be discouraged, and these sites will be monitored and recognized as being significant on internal mapping. Site records, maps, monitoring reports and files will be treated as sensitive data. The locations of these sites will be kept confidential.

All registered sites, within or outside zone H1, will be monitored at least annually. The monitoring report will include identification of any nonconforming uses and activities within 100 m of the site, assessment of stressors, description of the condition of the site (e.g. stable, increasing, decreasing) supplemented by photographic evidence, reasons for the condition, and any mitigation required and management actions proposed. If monitoring and enforcement are found insufficient for protection of these sites, measures may be undertaken to discourage human disturbance (e.g. visual screening along adjacent trails).

An archaeological assessment of the Blue Mountain area of the park and any other areas added to the park but not yet assessed will be completed when resources permit. The zoning plan for the park may be modified if, following further archaeological assessment, it is determined that any concentrations of

cultural heritage sites require protection different from that provided in the current zoning plan.

7.5 Recreational Resources

Where deemed necessary, surfaces such as crushed rock screenings or wood chips may be added to park trails or campsites to reduce compaction of soil, damage to exposed roots and lessen the possibility of user injury. Trails will be clearly marked and signed to reduce deviation from the main route. Boardwalks, bridges and stairs may be constructed along trails to assist with erosion control and to ease difficulty of travel in extreme terrain. Trails are discussed further in Section 8.4.2. Intensive recreational activities will be restricted to the development zone (D1) (e.g. car camping, beaches). The park provides opportunities to experience significant vistas and scenic landscapes, through low-intensity activities (e.g. hiking). Walk-in or boat-in campsites and picnic sites allow backcountry experiences along the lakeshore.

7.6 Inventory and Monitoring

Planning and management decisions are intended to ensure the ecological sustainability of protected areas (which includes social and economic components). Ontario Parks will ensure that these decisions are made with the best available information. Where this information is lacking, Ontario Parks may conduct inventories and monitoring, as necessary, to provide this information. Such efforts will be undertaken based on established methodologies and best practices. This will foster an adaptive management approach to protected areas management. The following are broad approaches to identifying inventory and monitoring needs: management actions identified in this management plan; public input; routine park maintenance activities; staff knowledge and experiences and environmental scans.

Specific monitoring projects are listed in Sections 7.3 and 7.4.

8.0 OPERATIONS POLICIES

Charleston Lake Provincial Park's operating plan will continue to provide Ontario Parks staff with the information required to operate the park on a day-to-day basis. The plan will provide specific direction for the management and operation of all park facilities and activities. In addition to the policies that follow, the plan will address such topics as budgets, staffing, maintenance, enforcement, and emergency services. The park operating plan will be consistent with the approved *Ontario Provincial Parks Minimum Operating Standards*, and will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

Self-serve facilities may be developed, and individual volunteers and partner organizations may be involved in park programs, to ensure that park operations continue to meet the standards of the park operating plan (Section 8.3).

Ontario Parks' staff may use mechanized vehicles (e.g. motorboats, snowmobiles, motor vehicles) in the park to the extent necessary for efficient park management and operations. In approving research applications (Section 8.2), Ontario Parks may authorize researchers to use motorboats and motor vehicles to the extent necessary for research to be conducted safely and efficiently. Both Ontario Parks' staff and approved researchers will conform wherever possible to the limitations applicable to recreational users, and will travel through the park on foot wherever possible. Any other public agency may use any craft or

vehicle for emergency rescues in the park, subject to the approval of the Park Superintendent.

A survey by an Ontario Land Surveyor of the park boundary in the Blue Mountain area was completed in winter 2003 as a priority to assist staff in resource management, protection, public safety and enforcement. Additional surveys were completed in 2004 for other areas of the park boundary (e.g. areas of Crown land proposed for addition to the park).

Where possible, park operations will minimize environmental impacts. This could be accomplished in part by reducing energy use (e.g. through use of energy efficient fixtures, solar power), noise and light pollution (e.g. radio restrictions), and vehicle emissions within the park (e.g. encourage cycling rather than motorized vehicle use).

8.1 Natural Heritage Education

Natural heritage education in provincial parks is intended to develop visitor awareness and appreciation of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage, fostering a commitment to protecting that heritage for all generations. Natural heritage education opportunities are meant to be educational and recreational, formal and informal, and accessible to all. There are three components of heritage education in parks: *information*, *interpretation*, and *outdoor recreation*. The level of service that each park provides depends on its significance and visitation. At Charleston Lake, natural heritage education is at the major activity level, the highest available.

The park's Natural Heritage Education Operating Plan (formerly referred to as the Visitor Services Management Plan) will continue to guide the park's information and communications services and interpretive and recreational programs. It will be reviewed annually and updated as required. The park will continue to offer:

- quality visitor information;
- a full range of interpretive and educational programs and opportunities, from unstructured individual exploration to organized programs directed to a variety of audiences; and
- appropriate outdoor recreation skills programs (e.g. canoeing).

As prescribed by the Natural Heritage Education Operating Plan, the principal themes of park interpretation are:

- North/South Transition (Frontenac Axis Geology, Ecology of the Axis – the "Tension Zone"); and
- Humans and the Environment (Aboriginal history, early European settlement, early recreation).

With the implementation of this park management plan, increased emphasis will be given to:

- interpreting the park's cultural heritage, including Aboriginal heritage, European settlement, and recreation;
- explaining the natural heritage management policies of this plan and any resource management plans;
- providing appropriate information related to the protection of species at risk;
- providing information about the many benefits of parks to society (e.g. education, research, human health, quality of life);
- better promoting park programs and services in the Kingston to Brockville area, and increasing community involvement;
- providing information about the park's role in the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve;
- providing more services in spring, fall, and winter; and
- providing more and better services to school groups.

8.2 Research

Scientific research by qualified individuals that contributes to the knowledge of natural and cultural history and to environmental and recreational management will be encouraged.

All research will be conducted by or authorized by Ontario Parks. Research projects will be administered through park policy directive PM 2.45 (Research Activities in Provincial Parks) and will require a research permit. Research must also meet all requirements under applicable provincial and federal legislation, including health and safety legislation. Approved research and monitoring activities must be consistent with Ontario Parks' Research and Information Strategy (1997). Temporary facilities in support of approved research and monitoring activities may be considered.

Approved research activities and facilities will be compatible with protection values and/or recreational uses in the park, and will be subject to development and management policies associated with the park's classification unless special permission is given. Sites altered by research activities will be rehabilitated as closely as possible to their previous conditions.

The following general fields of research are particularly appropriate to Charleston Lake Provincial Park and will be encouraged:

- landforms, vegetation, wildlife, fish and archaeology of the park;
- evolution of the park's landscapes in relation to natural processes and human activity;
- ecological restoration and management in the park;
- ecological impacts of interior campsites and picnic sites;
- the status of species at risk and rare species and communities; and
- optimal relationships between heritage protection and recreational enjoyment within the park.

Ontario Parks will evaluate and decide upon each application to conduct research using the following criteria, in addition to the research policies and strategies for provincial parks, the South Eastern Zone Research and Information Strategy (2001), and policies in this section of the plan:

- the subject matter of the research relative to the above priorities, and whether the proposed research complements existing research work and data;
- whether the park is a particularly suitable environment for the research, versus whether the research could be equally well conducted elsewhere;
- the methodology to be followed and the sensitivity of the resources to be investigated;
- for research on the islands, the researcher's skills and preparedness for safe boating without support from Ontario Parks; and
- the researcher's qualifications and experience, and past record, if any, in Charleston Lake or other provincial parks.

8.3 Partnerships

Formal partnership agreements may be established between Ontario Parks and third parties. Partners will represent the local community, and local and provincial interests. Partners will work with Ontario Parks to implement the approved park management plan and follow provincial park policies and regulations.

The Friends of Charleston Lake Park is a not-for-profit organization that has been a partner with the park since 1995, providing invaluable assistance. The

Friends' goal is to further the public's awareness, education, and understanding of the geological, historical or archaeological, cultural, and biological resources of Charleston Lake Provincial Park by supporting, encouraging, and undertaking educational, interpretive, and research activities in the park which help ensure the protection of its resources.

Ontario Parks will continue to encourage and assist the growth and development of the Friends of Charleston Lake Park. Ontario Parks will continue its existing partnerships with the Friends and explore new ones. Partnerships could be explored with other agencies, community and interest groups, and the private sector. Such partnerships will be essential to the achievement of the park's protection, heritage appreciation, recreation and tourism objectives.

Existing partnerships with the Friends of Charleston Lake Park that will be continued include:

- Producing interpretive and educational materials;
- Employing student interpreters and researchers;
- Staging special events; and
- Operating the Friends of Charleston Lake Park Nature Shop.

Future partnership areas that Ontario Parks may explore include:

- Increasing naturalist involvement in natural heritage inventory, research and stewardship, including monitoring of species at risk;
- Increasing community involvement in heritage education;
- Fostering corporate sponsorships of exhibits, programs, and special events; and
- Assisting with the Lake Management Plan as park resources are available (Section 5.3).

8.4 Recreation Management

Entry to the park will be controlled year round and day use and camping fees will be collected from all park visitors during the operating season.

Specific policies for several recreational uses are outlined within this section; other permitted recreational activities are listed in Appendix 1 and are in accordance with the policies for natural environment class parks as set out in *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Polices* (1992).

Opportunities for emerging recreational activities will require prior review based on provincial parks policies and park zoning before a decision is made as to whether such activities will be permitted within the park.

The following recreational activities are not permitted in the park:

- all-terrain vehicle use;
- aircraft takeoff and landing
- horseback riding;
- rock climbing; and
- scuba diving.

Activities such as overnight camping, open fires, or travel using mechanized means - other than authorized snowmobile use - are not compatible with zone NE2 and will be phased out through means such as signage, monitoring, or enforcement.

Recreational use, including picnicking and docking, will not be permitted within zone NR3.

Recreational use and development within zone NE3 will be strictly controlled to protect the shallow soils and sensitive features located on many of these islands. Day use at designated picnic sites will continue. Overnight camping is not compatible with these islands and is not permitted.

Cross-country skiing will continue to be permitted on marked trails that are groomed dependent on weather conditions and available resources.

Existing ski cabins in zones NR1 and H1 will be removed as resources permit.

8.4.1 Hunting

Hunting is permitted to continue within natural environment zone NE2 (Figure 3, Section 6.2). This recognizes the Ministry's commitment to continuing this traditional activity within the Blue Mountain area of the park, and allows for continuing this activity in the area of the Leeder Block that will be added to the park. Mechanized vehicles may not be used to support hunting. Signs will be placed along the trail to Blue Mountain and at designated entrances to zone NE2 indicating that hunting is permitted, and may be occurring based on annual hunting regulations. The activity of hunting is controlled and managed according to regulations under Federal and Provincial legislation (i.e. *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*).

8.4.2 Trails

Low impact recreational activities such as hiking, portaging, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing and photography will continue to be permitted on authorized trails.

Existing non-mechanized trail use will continue (e.g. hiking, cross-country skiing).

Aside from authorized snowmobile use described below (Section 8.4.3), and wheelchair use on stone dust portions of the Westside Trail System, trails in the park will be for non-mechanized use (e.g. hiking, portaging, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing).

Based on boundary survey(s), the existing trail to Mud Lake will be rerouted to ensure it is completely within the park boundary.

New non-mechanized use trails may be created, and will be formally named as they are developed. Trail development policies and standards are discussed in Section 9.0. Opportunities for trails within lands to be added to the park will be evaluated based on environmental values and access considerations. Partnerships for trail maintenance will be explored.

The park includes the following non-mechanized trails. The zone(s) that the trail passes through are noted in parenthesis.

Interpretive Trails (trail guide)
- Beech Woods (zone NR2)
- Hemlock Ridge (zone NR2)
- Shoreline Centennial (zone NE4)
- Sandstone Island (zone H1)

Other Trails
- Westside Trail System (Tallow Rock Bay East and West) (zones NE1, NR1)
- Quiddity Trail (lookout and portage) (zones NE1, NR1)
- Portage between Red Horse and Charleston Lake (zone NE5)
- Blue Mountain trails (zone NE2)

Proposed New Trail to Blue Mountain (zone NE2)
Unauthorized trails that begin on private lands south of Blue Mountain have traditionally been used for foot travel to the crest of Blue Mountain, largely during the fall season. Ontario Parks intends to provide an authorized pedestrian access to the crest of Blue Mountain over land from the south. In determining the location of the access route, park staff may consider public land and agreements with private landowners for the existing trail routes. Trail design

must be compatible with sensitive features and values of this area of the park, and respect any conditions of agreements with landowners. The trail will complement the existing authorized trail from Huckleberry Hollow.

The exact location for this trail has not been confirmed. Implementation of this direction will be subject to determination that the trail can be developed without impairing park values (e.g. significant cultural heritage features and species at risk and their habitats), and determining the location for designated access points (e.g. from the municipal road to the south). Other factors to consider prior to implementing this direction include: trail design, parking, signs, user safety, and park resources (e.g. monitoring, enforcement, search and rescue).

8.4.3 Mechanized Travel

Other than snowmobile use described below, and wheelchair use described above (Section 8.4.2) there will be no trails authorized for mechanized recreational use. The park contains significant earth and life science features that are sensitive to mechanized traffic, and in the Blue Mountain area unauthorized all terrain vehicle use has caused severe damage to these park values. This activity will be monitored and restrictions enforced. Existing unauthorized trails will be closed and blocked, and rehabilitated if feasible (Section 9.0).

Cycling will be permitted only on roads within the development zone D1.

Snowmobiling will be permitted only on existing OFSC trails within zone NE2 in the Blue Mountain area (Figure 3); on the primary park road within development zone D1; and within road allowances discussed in Section 9.2. No new trails will be permitted within the park.

Snowmobile use will be permitted on the Athens and District Snowmobile Club's existing trails in the Blue Mountain area when there is a minimum consistent snow depth of 30 cm. Regardless of snow depth the park superintendent may close the trail if conditions warrant. Because of the exposed rock knobs and sensitive vegetation prevalent at the crest of Blue Mountain, users will be required to leave machines at the base and proceed on foot (i.e. the groomed trail will end at the base of Blue Mountain). The OFSC will be encouraged to locate an alternate route outside the park for trail users who are traveling from point to point, with a destination other than Blue Mountain.

Motorized boating is permitted where in accordance with Federal boating regulations and park regulations. Federal regulations generally limit motorboat speeds to 10 km/h within 30 m of shore. Ontario Parks has boating restrictions in place for the waters of Runnings Bay, Slim Bay and Mud Bay within the park boundary. Ontario Parks will seek enforcement of speed limit restrictions on Charleston Lake under the *Canada Shipping Act* boating regulations. Ontario Parks will encourage compliance with present and future boating regulations through signage and other communications, visitor education, and enforcement. Park values potentially affected by non-compliant boating activities include amphibian and waterfowl nesting habitat along shorelines, and remote qualities of interior campsites and picnic sites. If the approach described herein does not adequately protect park values of concern, Ontario Parks may seek or support further regulations to restrict boating within the park boundary.

Buoys stretching across the bay north of Whitefish Island and Pike Island restrict motorboat access to waters of Runnings Bay within the park boundary. Motorized

vessels are not permitted within Slim Bay or Mud Bay, in order to preserve their serene nature and habitat for wildlife species such as the common loon (*Gavia immer*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), and largemouth bass (*Micropterus salmoides*). These boating restrictions will continue, in order to protect natural features and for safety reasons. Where necessary, other restrictions may be implemented as described above.

8.4.4 Roofed Accommodation

The demand and/or need for roofed accommodation though the use of Yurts or existing buildings will be proposed under a business plan. Proposals that will be considered include:

- Installation of Yurts on existing campsites or other appropriate locations within the development zone only, beginning with one or two Yurts;
- Upgrading existing park cabins in development zone D2 for use as roofed accommodation units. Any such use must minimize impacts on adjacent zones in the interests of maintaining ecological integrity (i.e. zones NR2 and NE2) and maintaining historical and archaeological values (i.e. zone H1).

The proposed staff house facility may be designed to accommodate group use at times of the year when it is not required for staff accommodation (Section 9.7).

8.5 Tourism Services

Tourism services, such as the rental of recreational equipment (e.g. canoes, kayaks, bicycles), may be developed and operated either through concession agreements or by Ontario Parks directly.

8.6 Marketing and Communications

A marketing plan will be prepared for the park consistent with the overall marketing strategy of Ontario Parks. The plan will develop strategies for:

- promoting the park on the basis of its natural and cultural heritage values;
- promoting the park's recreational opportunities; and
- promoting spring and fall use.

Communications regarding park policies and other information will be achieved through such means as park tabloids, brochures, trail guides, signage, notices and direct communication by park staff.

9.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

All development undertaken by Ontario Parks, or by partners on its behalf, will comply with *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* and Cultural Heritage Guidelines and be carried out in accordance with approved site and development plans that meet development standards for provincial parks.

Any areas proposed for development will require prior assessment for significant cultural heritage features and natural values - such as species at risk - to ensure these values are identified and protected.

Any restoration or reconstruction of cultural heritage features will conform to high standards of cultural authenticity and will be complementary to the features themselves.

Any new utility lines required by Ontario Parks will be built underground within rights of way of open roads wherever possible.

Figure 3 shows existing development. The new trail to Blue Mountain authorized by this plan is not illustrated, as the location is yet to be determined (Section 8.4.2). Within the limits established by this plan, the final location and extent of all development will be determined through site and development planning processes.

Existing development or facilities in zone D1 may be removed, upgraded or replaced as needed and as funding permits.

No new development will be permitted within zone NE4.

9.1 Trails

Park trails are for pedestrian use only and may have stiles or other suitable barriers installed to prevent unauthorized access. New trails or trail segments and associated viewing decks or blinds will be built to standards appropriate to their trail type. For the proposed new trail to Blue Mountain indicated in Section 8.4.2, proposed locations and standards will be made available for public review and comment before the trail is built. Trailheads may display a map of the trail system highlighting the current location of the user. Minimum impact ethics for park users may be prominently displayed.

Trail layout will avoid sensitive features. Minor trail additions or relocations may occur, to protect park values or for health and safety reasons.

No new trails will be created within the west area of the park outside of zone D1 (i.e., within zones NR1, NR2, NE1, NE4 or H1).

A cycling trail may be developed within the primary road right of way in zone D1.

9.2 Roads

Primary roads will be maintained to provincial parks operating standards for hard surfaced primary interior roads, and will occupy only as much of the right of way as required to meet those standards.

The primary and secondary road rights of ways in zone D1 may be widened as required to include traffic islands and junctions.

Woodvale Road

Woodvale Road is maintained by the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. Approximately 450 m of this road passes through the development zone of the park (D1), and motorized use will continue. This section of road is currently included within the regulated park boundary. Ontario Parks recommends that ownership of the road allowance be confirmed and if necessary that jurisdiction be transferred to the municipality. Prior to any work on the road adjacent to the park (e.g. surface, culverts, etc), the township will be encouraged to notify the Park Superintendent. Ontario Parks will work with the township to mitigate any impact road maintenance may have on the park.

Mountain Street and Blue Mountain Road

These traveled roads are maintained by the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands. Based on current mapping, approximately 430 m of Mountain Street diverges from the road allowance and passes through the regulated park boundary. The location of this section of road in relation to the park boundary has been confirmed through a boundary survey. Ontario Parks recommends that ownership of the road allowance be confirmed and if necessary that jurisdiction be transferred to the municipality. In the interim, mechanized use will be allowed to continue. Prior to

any work on the road (e.g. surface, culverts, etc) within or adjacent to the park, the township will be encouraged to notify the Park Superintendent. Ontario Parks will work with the township to mitigate any impact road maintenance may have on the park.

9.3 Campgrounds

No expansion of the 3 campground areas within the development zone (D1) is proposed by this plan.

Campsite management may require the development of a limited number of new campsites to allow upgrading or rehabilitating of existing campsites within the three car campgrounds and group camping area. Any upgrading or rehabilitating of the group campsites will not encroach on the deciduous woodland and aquatic marsh communities that are between the current group camping sites and the waters of Charleston Lake included in zone NE6.

9.4 Picnic areas

There are five mainland picnic areas and two island picnic areas within the park (Section 6.2). These sites will continue, and use will be adequately monitored and regulations enforced. No new sites are proposed by this plan.

9.5 Boathouse, Boat Launch and Docking

The existing boathouse facility within Boathouse Cove may be repaired, upgraded, expanded or replaced where necessary as resources permit and subject to appropriate approvals.

There is presently one designated boat launch with docking located in the park at Boathouse Cove. These facilities may be maintained or upgraded as needed subject to appropriate approvals and as funding permits, to provide optimum boat launching facilities or to increase docking space. No new boat launches will be developed.

Subject to appropriate approvals, a dock may be located at the Huckleberry Hollow landing to facilitate water access to the trail to Blue Mountain.

9.6 Canoe Launch

There is presently one canoe launch on Runnings Bay. This facility may be upgraded as needed and as funding permits, to provide optimum launching facilities for canoes and kayaks (e.g. a dock may be added).

9.7 Staff and Roofed Accommodation

The cabins within zone D2 may be removed, repaired, restored or adapted for appropriate use (Section 8.4.4), but may not be expanded, enlarged or replaced.

A new staff accommodation building may be developed within zone D1 to replace the staff cabins now in use, and increase capacity and quality of staff housing. The facility may be designed to accommodate group use outside peak staff periods (Section 8.4.4). Yurts may be considered for roofed accommodation within zone D1. Existing cabins within zone D2 may be considered for roofed accommodation (Section 8.4.4).

9.8 Maintenance and Administrative Areas

An additional storage building may be built near the maintenance complex in zone D1, as funding permits.

10.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Park development, operations and resource management will be contingent upon the availability of funding and unforeseeable changes in priorities or policy. Implementation of the management plan and operation of the park will meet the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*, *Environmental Bill of Rights*, *Provincial Parks Act*, *Endangered Species Act*, and other pertinent legislation.

All aspects of park management, development and operation will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*.

Implementation or site plans will precede major development or resource management initiatives, and will include an appropriate level of public consultation.

In order to effectively manage the park, various resource management plans will be prepared, and are listed among the initiatives that follow. A natural heritage education operating plan and park operating plan are already in place, and will be updated on an ongoing basis. Resource management plans will be made available for public review and comment in advance of approval or amendment.

10.1 Implementation Priorities

Priority will be given to completing the following major initiatives, as resources permit. Except where indicated otherwise in this plan, or as required under the legislation noted above, no further public consultation will be required for these developments to proceed.

10.1.1 Administration

- Seek regulation under existing legislation (e.g. *Fisheries Act, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act)* to prevent the use or possession of live bait within waters wholly contained within the park (Section 7.3.3).
- Update the park Fire Emergency and Evacuation Plan (Section 7.3.6).
- Review Natural Heritage Education Operating Plan annually and update as required (Section 8.1).

10.1.2 Development

- Build storage building near maintenance yard, zone D1 (Section 9.8).
- Remove barn, zone D1 (Section 9.0).
- Replace boathouse, zone D1 (Section 9.5).
- Install dock at canoe launch, zone D1 (Section 9.6).
- Install dock at Huckleberry Hollow, zone NE2, NE6 (Section 9.5).
- Create cycling trail along main park road, zone D1 (Section 9.1).
- Create pedestrian trail to Blue Mountain as authorized land access (e.g. site plan and trail plan, meet EA requirements), zone NE2 (Section 8.4.2, 9.1).

10.1.3 Boundary and Land Tenure

- Regulate areas of Crown land to be added to the park by this plan (Section 5.0).
- Complete minor amendments to the boundary (Section 5.0, 9.2).

10.1.4 Resource Management

- Complete studies/inventories to identify and manage species at risk in the park and monitor other species (Section 7.3.5).
- Prepare statement of fire intent and if appropriate a forest fire management plan (Section 7.3.6).

- Prepare vegetation management plan (Section 7.3.2).
- Complete fisheries assessment of Mud Lake, zone NE2 (Section 7.3.3).
- Monitor registered cultural heritage sites annually (Section 7.4).
- Complete archaeological assessment of the Blue Mountain area of the park and any other areas added to the park and not yet assessed (Section 7.4).

10.1.5 Operations – Recreation Management

- Close and block ATV trails in the Blue Mountain area of the park, and monitor and enforce restrictions, zone NE2 (Section 8.4.3).

11.0 PLAN AMENDMENT AND REVIEW

The park management plan can be reviewed or amended to address changing issues or conditions. At ten year intervals, this plan will be assessed for the need of a review or amendment. A review may involve a reassessment of all or part of the plan, including classification, zoning, goal, objectives and all resource management, operations and development policies. An amendment can be considered to address specific issues or needs.

12.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Ontario Parks was committed to consultation with government agencies, other ministries, interest groups and the public throughout this management planning process. There were public consultation opportunities at each stage of the management planning process, as outlined below, and responses were considered in determining proposed policy. The methods of consultation utilized during release of park management planning documents were as follows:

Mailing Lists
- Mandatory Mailing List – as per Provincial Park Policy (PM 11.02.02)
- Individuals/groups/agencies that responded to the Invitation to Participate
- Adjacent commercial bait harvesters and commercial fishing operators
- New individuals/groups who request to be added to the mailing list at any stage

Newspaper advertisements
Newspaper advertisements or notices were placed in the following newspapers:
- The Gananoque Reporter
- The Kingston Whig-Standard
- The Brockville Recorder & Times
- The Ottawa Citizen

Posted Notices
Notices were posted in various public buildings in the Kingston, Brockville and Ottawa area, and at the park. Information was also provided in the park tabloid.

Environmental Registry
Policy proposal notices and a decision notice posted on this website advertised the opportunities for the public review.

Ontario Government
All Charleston Lake Provincial Park planning documents were available at the park, the Ontario Parks Southeast Zone office in Kingston, and the MNR Kemptville District Office.

12.1 Invitation to Participate

The terms of reference for this management planning project were approved by the Managing Director of Ontario Parks in June of 2001. Public involvement in the development of the management plan for Charleston Lake

Provincial Park began in August of 2001, with the mailing of the invitation to participate to individuals and groups believed to have an interest in this project. An advertisement was placed in local newspapers, and a notice was posted on the Environmental Registry of the *Environmental Bill of Rights*, announcing a 45 day opportunity for public review and comment on the terms of reference. Specific comments submitted during this stage related to the following issues: protecting and preserving the park, concern about recreational activities on Charleston Lake, ensuring the health of Charleston Lake, the park's role in working with other stakeholders in the Charleston Lake area, the addition of Crown lands within the Leeder Block, the need for trails and trail maintenance, access to the park, and the role of the park in the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

12.2 Background Information, Issues and Plan Alternatives

The background information, issues and plan alternatives document was released in February of 2002. The document proposed a classification, goal, objectives and zoning policy for Charleston Lake Provincial Park. This document summarized the most important planning and management issues that had been identified; and proposed either a single policy direction for each issue or provided two or more policy alternatives.

The document and an accompanying questionnaire were distributed by either postal mail (print copy) or by email (link to electronic copy) to mandatory contacts, those who responded to the invitation to participate, and local media. A notice was posted on the Environmental Registry, announcing the 45 day review period. This review period was later extended from April 10, 2002, to June 14, 2002. Open houses were held in the park on June 5 and 8, 2002.

Issues that were most commented on during public review of the background information, issues and plan alternatives document were: potential Crown land additions, access to Blue Mountain, recreational activities (sport hunting, snowmobiling, all terrain and off road vehicles, mountain biking). *Background Information, Issues and Plan Alternatives: A Summary of Public Response* (September 2002) provides more detail and is available from Ontario Parks.

12.3 Preliminary Park Management Plan

The preliminary park management plan was released in August of 2003. The document included: a summary of comments received related to key planning and management issues identified during the previous stage and Ontario Parks' response to the comments; proposed park classification, goal, and objectives; proposed park boundary amendments; proposed zoning policy; and proposed preferred policies for resource management, operation and development of the park.

Approximately 250 copies of the document were distributed in August of 2003 by postal mail (print copy) or email (link to electronic copy) to the contact list for the planning process (mandatory and local contacts). Copies of the document were also available at the park and MNR Kemptville District office. A notice was posted on the Environmental Registry on August 6, 2003 announcing the 45 day review period. This review period was later extended one week to September 27, 2003 due to a power blackout. Open houses were held in the park on August 21 and 23, 2003.

Although relatively few responses were received during the review period for this stage of the project, most of those who responded were supportive in general of the proposed policies in the preliminary plan. Some concerns noted included: long-term protection for the Leeder Block lands remaining within the District Crown land base; boundary issues with adjacent lands; minimizing impacts to Blue Mountain from snowmobiling. Where appropriate, sections of the plan that had been commented on were clarified; in other cases clarification was provided directly to the respondent.

In addition to minor wording changes to clarify policies in this plan and format changes based on current document standards, review of the preliminary plan resulted in the following modifications:

- The zoning for the western section of the Blue Mountain area was changed from nature reserve (previously proposed as zone NR3) to natural environment, resulting in a single natural environment zone for this area of the park (zone NE2). Inclusion in the broader natural environment zone more accurately reflects the sensitivity of features within this area, previous commitments for recreational hunting and proposed continuation of use of the existing snowmobile trail (Section 6.2).

- Determined that the two access zones proposed were not necessary, since the current wording related to these areas in Section 6.2, Zone NE2 and Section 9.2, Development Policies (Roads) was sufficient to allow continued use. These areas were incorporated into the adjacent zone NE2 (Section 6.2).

- Created a new development zone (zone D2) for the two existing cabins previously included within zones NR2 and H1 and identified as non-conforming use to be continued. A third cabin, for which the presence within the park was not known at the time of the preliminary management plan, is also included within this zone. This zone more clearly separates the policies for these three existing cabins and defines a minimal footprint for each one (Section 6.4).

- Added enabling statements for proposed new development within zone D1 (e.g. remove barn, replace boathouse, install docks, new staff accommodation) (Section 6.4, 9.0).

- Under wildlife management, clarified current monitoring of deer and added a sentence identifying that a resource management plan may be prepared if research indicates the deer population is a concern (Section 7.3.4).

- For the snowmobiling policy, minimum snow depth was increased to 30 cm, and policy was strengthened to require users to remain off the crest of Blue Mountain (Section 8.4.3).

- For hunting policy, the proposal to seek restriction on the use of dogs was removed; this use is not currently a concern, but a restriction may be sought if justified in the future. Wording related to harvest records was removed to recognize there is no requirement system for hunters to report their records or presence to the park (Section 8.4.1).

- Rock climbing and scuba diving were added to the list of activities not permitted (Section 8.4).

- Added enabling statements for staff accommodation and roofed accommodation (Sections 8.4.4, 9.7).

13.0 KEY REFERENCES

All documents were prepared by and for MNR except as noted, and are available for inspection at the Ontario Parks, Southeast Zone office. Copies of the asterisked documents are available without charge on request from Ontario Parks, 51 Heakes Lane, Kingston, Ontario K7M 9B1, (613) 545-4016.

Background Information Issues and Plan Alternatives: Summary of Public Response, 2002.*

Brief Geomorphology and Geology of Charleston Lake Provincial Park. Earth Science Series, Open File Report 7422, by S.M. Clement, 1974.

Charleston Lake Provincial Park Master Plan, 1978.

Charleston Lake Preliminary Park Management Plan, 2003.*
Charleston Lake Provincial Park Background Information, Issues and Plan Alternatives, 2002.*

Charleston Lake Provincial Park Natural Heritage Education Operating Plan, 2002 (updated annually).

Species At Risk In Ontario List, regularly revised.

Invasive Exotic Plant Management Strategy, Ontario Parks South Eastern Zone, 2003.

Life Science Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest in Site District 6-10, by David J. White, 1993.

Life Science Survey and Evaluation of the Blue Mountain ANSI and Charleston Lake Crown Islands, by David J. White, 1994.

Life Science Survey and Evaluation of Charleston Lake Provincial Park, by David J. White, 1998.

Life Science Survey and Evaluation of the Leeder Block of Crown land, by David J. White, 2003.

Ministry of Natural Resources Statement of Environmental Values, 1995.

Ontario Parks, A Research and Information Strategy. Part One: Setting Priorities, 1997.

Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual, 1994.

Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies, 1992.

Protecting What Sustains Us – Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, 2005

Research and Information Strategy 2001 – 2006, Ontario Parks South Eastern Zone, 2001.

The Economic Impacts of Ontario Parks: A Summary Report for Fiscal 2000/01, 2002.

14.0 APPENDICES

14.1 Appendix 1. Permitted Uses and Development

The permitted uses in this table are in accordance with *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies* (1992).

	Nature reserve zones	Historical zone	Natural environment zones	Development zone
Commercial Activities (Section 7.2)				
Aggregate Extraction				
Commercial bait fishing Existing New	PO[1]		Y/NE6, PO[1]	
Commercial fishing Existing New	PO[1]		Y/NE6, PO[1]	
Commercial fur harvest Existing New				
Commercial hydro development				
Commercial timber harvest				
Commercial tourism				
Mineral exploration/development				
Management Activities (Section 7.0, 8.0, 9.0)				
Fire suppression	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fish stocking			Y	
Existing roads (non-park use)				Y
Nature appreciation-self guided	Y	Y	Y	Y
Photography and painting	Y	Y	Y	Y
Research	Y	Y	Y	Y
Recreation Activities (Section 6.0, 8.4)				
All-terrain vehicle use On trails Off trails				
Boating (powered)[2]			Y/NE6[3]	
Camping			Y/NE1, NE4[4]	Y/D1
Cycling				Y[5]
Horseback riding				
Non-motorized recreation travel (canoeing, kayaking, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rock climbing				
Snowmobiling			Y/NE2[6]	Y[7]
Fishing	Y		Y	
Hunting			Y/NE2	
Scuba and skin diving				

	Nature reserve zones	Historical zone	Natural environment zones	Development zone
Development Permitted (Section 9.0)				
Walking trails	Y	Y	Y	Y/D1
Bike trails				Y/D1
Basic day use facilities [8]	Y[9]	Y	Y	Y/D1
Intensive day use facilities [10]				Y/D1
Campgrounds			Y/NE1, NE4[11]	Y/D1
Interpretive facilities	Y[12]	Y[12]	Y[12]	Y/D1
Visitor information and service facilities				Y/D1
Necessary signs	Y	Y	Y	Y
Roofed accommodation				Y
Access roads and parking	Y/NR2[13]	Y/H1[13]	Y/NE2, NE4[13]	Y
Main roads and entry station				Y/D1

Notes to Table 1

Y Permitted
Y/xx Permitted in zone(s) xx only
Y/xxi Permitted in zone(s) xx only, and only under the conditions in note i.
PO Activity to be phased out
Blank Not permitted or not possible

1 To be phased out on waterbodies completely enclosed by the park.
2 As long as commercial bait harvesting and bait fishing are permitted in accordance with Section 7.2, licenced harvesters are not subject to the restrictions shown for this use within Runnings Bay.
3 Ontario Parks has a restriction on motorized boating within Slim Bay, Mud Bay and the boat restriction area on Runnings Bay. Ontario Parks will seek to restrict personal watercraft from these areas, as well as from Boathouse Cove and within the park boundary adjacent to interior picnic and camping sites.
4 Interior campsites (boat-in, walk-in), vault privies.
5 On roads only.
6 On existing authorized OFSC trails only.
7 On primary park road only.
8 Individual picnic sites, vault privies, etc.
9 Vault privies only, as required to support walking trail use only.
10 Picnic shelters, group picnic areas, comfort stations etc...
11 Boat–in / walk-in only (i.e. low intensity).
12 Minimal facilities only.
13 For access to walking trails only.

The Park Superintendent has the authority under the *Provincial Parks Act* to close any part of the park (i.e. land or water) to any use, or to restrict any use, for any period of time. In public use areas, this authority would only be used for emergency closures, either to protect park values or to ensure public safety.

51857
(0.150 k P.R. 30 03 07)
ISBN 978-1-4249-3359-4 (print)
ISBN 978-1-4249-3360-0 (PDF)